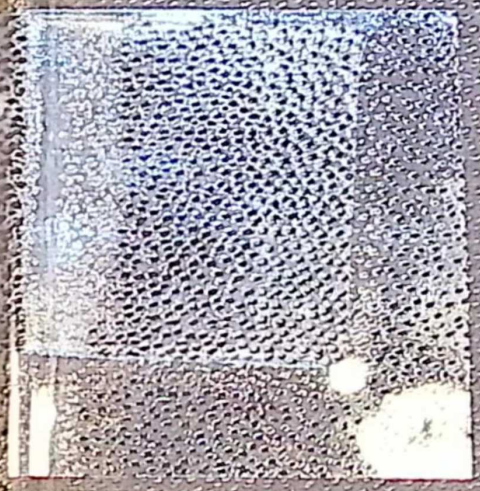
THEOLOGY FOR THE MASSES.

BY J. DE WITT BURKHEAD, D. D.



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J. DeWitt Burkhead.

"THEOLOGY FOR THE MASSES,"

—OR—

BIBLE TRUTHS FOR ALL MEN.

By J. DeWITT BURKHEAD, D. D.,

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PREFACE.

Having been frequently requested by individuals and churches to put in a more permanent form the thoughts I have so often expressed from the pulpit, on the fundamental principles of our holy religion, I have concluded to gratify their wishes; and relying on their judgment, this volume is sent forth to perform its mission, with the earnest prayer that the Holy Spirit will go with it. Should it prove a blessing to the weak, in strengthening; to the timid, in encouraging; to the doubter, in relieving; to the spiritually proud, in humbling; to the lethargic, in stimulating; to the careless, in arousing; or determine a single anxious inquirer after truth, to "cast his burden on the Lord," the writer will be amply repaid for his trouble.

To set forth the truth in a plain and simple way; illustrating it as much as possible; and proving each point by the Scriptures themselves, without making any effort at nice distinctions between cognate truths, which are not only right and proper, but demanded in a system of theology, has been the effort of the writer throughout these pages.

While each chapter is designed to be an entirety in itself as much as possible, still the reader will find that certain principles and doctrines discussed in one chapter are sometimes more fully explained in another.

The volume is intended to be what its name denotes, "Theology for the Masses," or Bible truths for all men. And as the Bible is

the only "rule of faith and practice," it is matter of the utmost importance that its teachings be placed in so clear a light, before all degrees of intelligence, that none may mistake its meaning. Whether or not this has been done in the following pages, must and will be decided by those who give them a careful perusal. May the blessing of the Triune God abide upon each reader, is the earnest prayer of the

AUTHOR.

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THEOLOGY FOR THE MASSES.

CHAPTER I.

THE FALL AND RECOVERY.

Concerning the origin of sin, or moral evil, the Bible is silent. That it exists, is a fact that no one can question. It tinges all human activities, and mingles with all human experiences. The questions, when? where? and how? it came into existence, cannot be answered by any creature; still we can trace it back beyond the creation of Adam, and perhaps into the ages before the foundations of the world were laid. Angels, we are told, sinned, and were cast out of heaven, whom God "hath reserved in everlasting chains, under darkness, unto the judgment of the great day." (Jude, vi.) We know also that sin was in the garden of Eden before Adam transgressed. It was in the serpent, the Devil, that tempted Eve. "The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat." (Gen. iii. 13.)

Inspiration, then, clearly teaches that sin was in existence before the world was made, and also that it was in the world before Adam sinned. Hence the Bible invariably treats with it as a thing al-

ready in existence, and not a thing to come into existence. In other words, it antedates the Bible.

The question that forces itself upon the serious consideration of all intelligent and responsible creatures is, why did not God crush it out of existence, since its only power is to blot and blur all created perfection and beauty, and curse and destroy man, the creature, made in the image of Deity? There must have been a sufficient reason why He both permitted it to come into existence, and why He permits it to remain. This reason must, doubtless, have been to manifest His own glory, and to lift man from his Eden home, to heaven—God's home—since both these results have followed. Hence, when God had created man in His own image, pure, spotless and holy, and placed him in the garden of Eden, having constituted him the *federal head*, as well as the representative in law, of all his posterity, He did not purpose that Adam should not become a sinner, but He permitted him to sin. We conceive it to be inconsistent with the very nature and character of God to decree sin, and as there is not a single expression in the Bible from which we can infer the contrary, we need not trouble ourselves any further with theories and speculations about its origin. That it exists is an indisputable fact. God did not decree sin, but He permitted Adam to sin. In other words, He proposed to take the sin already in existence, and, in His own

way, bring out of it the greatest imaginable good. It is like making something out of nothing, as was the material universe, or raising the dead into life, which only God can do.

To the careful reader of the Scriptures, it is very apparent that all the fundamental doctrines and principles of our holy religion march through the Bible in pairs, and it is through the medium of the lesser truth, that we gain a comparative idea of the greater. Thus God's sovereignty, which our finite minds are incapable of comprehending, is linked with human free-agency, which is a thing of experience, and through the medium of the latter we get a comparative idea of the former. Also, Law and Gospel are joined together; so, too, the fall of man and his redemption. You must not attempt to separate what God has joined together. It is peurile to ask how could God have been just after making man and permitting him to sin, if He had not redeemed him from the curse of the fall, seeing that He was under no obligation to redeem him?

The fall of man, by transgression, and his recovery through the redemption of Jesus Christ, were both in the purpose of God from all eternity. See Matt. xxv. 34: "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." Luke, xi. 50: "Blood shed from the foundation of the world."

John xvii. 24: "Thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world." Eph. i. 4: "Chosen us in him before the foundation of the world." 1 Pet. i. 20: "Foreordained before the foundation of the world." Rev. xiii. 8: "Lamb slain from the foundation of the world."

From these Scriptures it becomes apparent that redemption was not an after-consideration. The fact is, God never intended that Adam should be the saviour of men; He purposed that the Lord Jesus Christ should be their Saviour.

Had Adam never sinned, he would, of necessity, have been his own saviour and the saviour of all included in his Federal Headship, and whom he represented in law; in short, all his posterity. But God decreed permissively that Adam should sin, and he *did* sin, for God's glory and man's good.

Neither God's glory nor man's good is visible in the fall, for nothing but evil and sin, with their fearful, dire results, appear in that, but in the recovery. In this, both are clearly visible, and each marks a much higher and brighter degree of God's love for man than was manifested in his creation in a state of purity. Viewed through the glasses of redemption, Adam, the sinner, is far grander than, apart from redemption, Adam, the innocent, was in the garden of Eden.

The inspired record teaches that God made man in His own image; that He "breathed into him

the breath of life and man became a living soul." It also teaches that God planted a garden eastward in Eden, and there He placed man. It teaches likewise that "God saw that it was not good for man to be alone," and that He caused a "deep sleep to come upon him," and while he slept, God took a rib from him and made a woman for a helpmeet. Thus, the first human pair were made; and the whole earth, with the beasts of the field, the birds of the air and the fishes of the sea were put under his control. Man was constituted lord of all, with authority to control all, and with power to exercise rightful dominion over all. Then, man's surroundings were as beautiful as imagination can conceive; as lovely as infinite goodness could devise, and as pure as Divine power could execute. In all the vast regions of space, from the remotest world that shines in the sky, to the utmost limit of the new-formed earth, not a single deformity met the eye, not a single discord fell upon the ear, not an offensive odor presented itself to the nostrils, nor the slightest pain pierced the human frame. Decay was a stranger to earth and sky, and death, the subsequent horror of horrors, had not been born. The perfection of beauty was painted on the landscape; fruits, golden and luscious, burdened the boughs of the trees; birds warbled their sweetest carols amid the foliage of the forest; and to crown "all perfection and beauty," the enrapturing voice

of the great Creator was heard in Eden. Hill answered hill with the echo of the strains thereof; lowly glens and verdant meadows caught up the musical rhythm and sped it on and on the world around, and the waves of Euphrates, murmuring the symphony of the same divine anthem, bore it along and imparted it to the billows of the "deep blue sea." All nature was vocal with the praises of the great Creator, and man, the embodiment of the divine perfections, in so far as the creature can image them, chanted the sublimest *Te Deum* of all. His being was grand; his surroundings beautiful; his mission sublime; and his companionship with his Creator God-like.

Can the human conceive of a happier or better condition? Could the mere human, imagine the slightest change in anything in any part of the universe or in himself that would be for the better? Had Adam been interrogated as to his opinion, he would doubtless have said: "Don't touch with a finger, you will mar the beauty! Don't change a single thing, you will destroy all! Let me alone; I can enjoy nothing more; I can desire nothing better; I can wish for nothing else! Here let me spend eternity; here let me praise forever!"

But God sees things in a different light, and other things, too, hid from Adam's eye, which are infinitely grander, and for which the unfathomed capabilities of Adam, yet latent and unappreciated by

him, are precisely suited. Hence he, when introduced into this higher realm, will wonder why such fascination could have thrilled him so in the lower Eden. A more enlarged view of the nature of God, and His methods of working, than was visible in Eden, alone could lift him into a true appreciation of his own immortal dignity and give him a more comprehensive view of the eternal perfections of his Creator. The universe existed in the mind of God from all eternity as a single thought. The various forms matter has assumed are but the expression of that thought. Hence, all that Adam could appreciate in his pristine state was this thought of God manifested in creation. A nearer relationship with God than that formed by creative power, or, in other words, a nearer relationship than that naturally existing between the creature and his creator, Adam was unable to *conceive*, much less comprehend.

But from all eternity, God conceived a closer and a sweeter one; and it was His unswerving, wise, and eternal purpose to establish such relationship with His creature, man, and to establish it in such a way, that *all* the glory should be given to God, and all the *benefits* should accrue to man. Hence, "He hath done for us far above all that we could ask." (Eph. iii. 20.) Now, this purpose of God first begins to unfold itself by slow degrees. It was to save man by righteousness, and not by purity, nor worthiness, nor goodness, nor by anything that was his by creation.

God never purposed to save man because of any of these things, but solely by righteousness.

This unfolds another important fact in God's wise and eternal purpose, viz., the necessity that Adam should be constituted both the *Federal*-head and representative of all his posterity, and that he should be put under law. The righteousness that saves is the result of obedience to law. It is not inherent righteousness. While Adam obeys the law, the law says, Adam, you are doing right. It is the law that decides whether the action is right or wrong.

Thus far there is no transgression and consequently no sin in him, "for sin is the transgression of the law." As far as Adam and the world are concerned, all things are still beautiful and harmonious. The love of God still throbs in every pulse, gilds every sky, and crowns with glory, all the work of His hands. The stars acknowledge it "and the earth and the world" revel in it.

Great as God's love for man was, as appears in his creation, it is not worthy to be compared with that soon to be revealed in his redemption. Before sin entered into the world, God's love ran smoothly in the channel of His own purity and pleasure, without a cause to swell its current, or an excuse to defy its banks. Angels rebelled, sinned and fell; yet, undisturbed, it coursed along its well-defined channel, without a perceptible swell in its current, or excitement in its wave. The morning stars sang together,

and every bright and burning sphere above, and hills, and dales, and waves of ocean, joined in the chorus at the birth of time; yet, smoothly, sweetly, in the ordinary channel, the love of God flowed gently on. Yet, notwithstanding its steady course, enlivening every pursuit, blessing every state, and making heaven all praise and rapture, with the consciousness of having the divine approbation, it nevertheless was destined to burst its "pent up Utica," overflow its banks and manifest itself to all intelligences, more wonderfully than they had ever conceived before.

When man fell, its current swelled; rolled over its banks; flowed down by Eden and the Tree of Life; submerged a world staggering under the curse and burden of sin; lifted man, the sinner, upon its heaving tide; soothed his sorrows at being banished the garden; bound up the wounds vindictive justice made; poured in the oil of promise of a brighter, grander home in *heaven*, which more than healed the wounds; brought a guardian Angel from the skies to watch his pathway; delicious manna upon which his soul could feast; and showed him that though he lost purity, he could have righteousness in its stead; though he lost Eden, he could gain heaven; (there never had been a heaven if man had not sinned and been redeemed. Heaven is the result of redemption); though he lost the sinless state of Angels, he can acquire a position above Angels; though he lost

the presence of God as his Creator, he can gain him as a brother; and though he sinned away his right to talk face to face with God, he can gain a much more enviable relation, even that of "King and Priest unto God."

Thus it is evident that man lost nothing by the fall that is worthy to be compared with what he has gained through redemption. Then, (before the fall), he was a man and could be nothing more; now, he can be elevated to a *priestly* office. Then, he was a little lower than the Angels; now, he can "judge Angels." Then, he was the possessor of earth only; now, he can be joint heir with Christ Jesus to his heavenly and eternal inheritance.

Thus, considering redemption in connection with the fall, and as in the purpose of God from all eternity, as well as was the fall, it becomes palpable that the *ability* to sin which God gave Adam in his creation, and not at the moment he was tempted, is one of the brightest manifestations of His love for him. It is evident, that man could never have risen so high in the scale of being as he now can, had he never fallen. And it is equally evident, that had he never sinned, he could never have had such large appreciation of the attributes of God, or of God in all His manifestations as he now has.

Before he sinned, he was simply good; the moment he fell, he became *great*. Before he sinned, he had only a Preserver; the moment he fell, he had a

Redeemer. Before he sinned, his person consisted of two parts only, soul and body; in his fall, he acquired the capacity to have a third part added to his being, viz., spirit, or new birth, or new nature. So now each believer has the new nature as well as the old. Before he sinned, he was circumscribed in every effort to do or not to do, and in his powers to scan immortal beneficence. His fall, proved to be an enlargement of his prison-house, an unbinding of his fetters and an implantation of new and sublimer capacities. In his fall, the closing of the gate of Eden behind him, was the opening of the door of heaven before him and above him. Sin, it is true, to some extent, deafened his ear to the song of birds and untainted breezes, but prepared the way for the implanting of a spiritual organ to be ravished with the grander refrain of angels and cherubims. Before the fall, God loved man simply as His creature, consequently as vastly his inferior; in the fall, He "so loved the world" as to make him a brother, an equal heir to His great and eternal inheritance, and also a "king and priest unto God." Hence, sin was the occasion of man's infinite exaltation. Therefore we conclude that God's love for man was very great, because, after giving him the ability to sin, He put him on trial. "For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh." Rom. viii. 3. For if man sins not, there can be no redemption; if no redemption, then there can be no heaven, for

heaven is the result of redemption, or in consequence of redemption.

There is an eternal fitness in things. Eden was precisely suited to a pure and innocent being, and Adam was precisely suited to Eden. But Eden was not suitable for the home of a redeemed being. Redemption is much greater than creation. So the home of the redeemed soul, must be far grander than creation could offer. Hence, Jesus said, "I go to prepare a place for you" He prepared heaven to be precisely in keeping with the redeemed soul, as Eden was, with the pure and innocent soul. I now repeat, God's love for man appears in the fact that He created him with the ability to sin, and then put him on trial.

Yet, like all those grand designs of God, intended to "work together" for the creature's good, it was veiled with a cloud of incomprehensible mystery, not turning its bright side to the gaze of the beholder, but purposely concealing it, in order to prepare the creature to understand more clearly how God's love can comprehend the vilest, and His grace rescue the most hopelessly depraved. The cloud that over-shadows all our future prospects with its terrific blackness is sin. This is what we see in ourselves and in others. This is what we appreciate.

The fall of man was an awful calamity and brought with it an awful curse. There is nothing good in it—all is bad. Here are some of its results:

When sin entered into the heart of Adam, it polluted all its springs, and drew down the appended curse; the sword of justice leaped from its resting-place; the tree of life flamed with angry cherubims; the fondling lion and gentle tiger began to thirst for human blood; birds flew affrighted from the hand that once caressed them; the trees shed their fruits and foliage; the flowers drooped and died; the very ground was cursed and refuses still to yield its increase; thorns and briars infest the soil; the earth sent up a fatal miasma; drops of perspiration gathered upon the brow, which before was cool; the coursing blood in the veins boiled into a fever; distressing pains darted through the brain; human life hung upon a single thread—that thread the *enemy* of all things on earth, at which every bow was drawn and every arrow aimed; the fiery vault, "prepared for the Devil and his angels," put in a just claim to be the everlasting home of the disobedient, rebellious creature; and to complete the ruin, God withdrew his companionship, but drove man from His presence to contend for his life, with all the engines of destruction, which his own sin had forged, and to subsist amid such awful surroundings by tilling the ground.

It was under these insupportable, crushing circumstances that the cloud whirled around and presented its bright side to man; and the enrapturing promises written thereon by the finger of God were

all that man could ask. "I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed," fell upon his ear. "I will *never* leave thee nor forsake thee," rejoiced his heart. "Earth has no sorrow that heaven cannot heal," was the music of every sound. "There is a fountain opened in the house of David for sin and uncleanness," gave wings to his hopes. "Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as wool," thrilled his being. "Where sin abounds (and it abounds everywhere on earth) grace shall much more abound," made him rejoice. "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom," was all he could possibly desire.

Then it was that man first saw, and understood how the Lord could bring good out of evil, and what he, himself, had gained by the fall, through the medium of redemption. For what are sorrow, affliction, suffering, pain, anxiety, disappointment, temporal death and all the other ills of life, the legitimate fruits of the fall, in comparison with the raptures of heaven, a shining crown, perpetual blessedness, a kingly sceptre, a priestly robe, an eternity in the blissful presence and on the throne of the Redeemer, which are the legitmate fruits of redemption? Man can well afford to endure the one, as a condition, to secure the other. The rule is, "If ye suffer with me, ye shall also reign with me." No suffering—no reigning. It is evident

that God's creating man with the ability to sin, and then putting him on trial in Eden, is a marked manifestation of His love for him.

But another state, or another condition was reserved, that God might manifest still greater love for him than is yet apparent. For it was not until man was sinking beneath the pressure of his insupportable burden of sin, that God could manifest such great love for him as that so clearly revealed in His word. The brightest of all the discoveries of God's love for the sinner, appears in the incarnation of "His only begotten and well-beloved son." Hence, inspiration could express it no otherwise than by saying, "God so loved the world."

There is much more meant by the incarnation of the son of God than simply to provide a way by which sinners shall escape the penalty of the law and shun everlasting perdition. This is the least part of its meaning. Still, if it meant only this, it would afford just ground for ceaseless praises.

It does not mean, either, that man shall be restored to the same state of innocence and peace in which he was created, and in which, for a time, he lived, though this would have been a still more wonderful mending of his condition, and a marvelous mercy, that should, and would have obligated him to still greater gratitude and sweeter praises.

The Incarnation means all this, and it means a vast deal more than this. It means that man shall be

carried to precisely the same point of exaltation and glory to which Christ carried our natures "when He ascended on high, and where He ever liveth to make intercession for us." Christ, in his ascension, did not stop in Eden. If He had, we had gained nothing by redemption over what we had in creation. Then redemption, which is the work of God, had been no greater than the fall, which is the result of man's disobedience. But He ascended to the right hand of His Father, and He carried our natures with Him; and now, instead of a tree to cover our heads and shield us from the storms, and birds to make music, as delighted man in Eden, Christ has gone to prepare "mansions" for our abode, where sublimer anthems from the lips of ministering intelligences make music consonant with the glory of God, and which in harmony echoes the grander strains of the spheres, "Hallelujah, the Lord God Omnipotent reigneth."

Such is the glory of the eminence to which Christ has carried our natures, and such the infinite greatness achieved for us, through redemption, over the state of our first creation.

The Incarnation means the saving from everlasting punishment, translation to heaven, putting principalities and powers beneath us, appointing us judges of angels, seating us on the throne of God, and making the Incarnate Jesus "*one*" with us, in such a way, that we cannot (after entering heaven)

sin, as long as He is holy, or lose our crown of rejoicing while He exists.

Holiness and purity in Eden or in heaven are not bars to temptation, sin and misery, as both Adam and fallen angels testify; and if redemption had failed to make Christ and the redeemed soul "one," then the glorified soul in heaven could have had no guarantee that his crown would forever deck his brow, or that his purity would be of long continuance.

The pure and holy angels in heaven sinned, rebelled and fell, and are now reserved "under chains of darkness." But, blessed be God, a redeemed and glorified soul is safe forever, for through the Incarnation it is "one" with Jesus.

In view of these facts, have *we* not greater cause to bless God, though now enveloped in a cloud of sin and experiencing its curse, than the angels have? Can we go "mourning about the streets" because sensible of our sinfulness, our guilt and danger, when we are assured that these evils were permitted to overtake us in order to pave the way for our greater exaltation and glory? Shall we fear and tremble when most conscious of our weakness and unworthiness, since Christ, our Redeemer, has carried our natures up to His throne? Can we dread to meet the disappointments of life, and the pangs of bereavement and sorrow, since these things have overtaken us for the express purpose of securing our everlasting peace and happiness? Will we fear to

"suffer with Christ," since this is the condition to reign with him in glory? Will we still fear to die and lay these poor bodies in the grave, since Christ has decreed this as a prerequisite to entering upon everlasting life?

What is human sorrow, compared with the certainty of eternal joy? Was it not a great mercy that Christ decreed that we should taste the one in order to enjoy the other? Cannot we exclaim with the Apostle Paul, "Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory?" 2 Cor. iv. 17. And do we not recognize the consoling truth here expressed, viz., if we had not sinned, we could not have been afflicted; and if not afflicted, we could never have aspired to such an "exceeding and eternal weight of glory."

Certainly it was a marvelous manifestation of love for us and all our race, that God purposed that we should lose the "integrity" of the *first* Adam, in order to secure the "perfection," "power" and "glory" of the *second* Adam. In considering this glorious truth, Inspiration expresses joyful wonder. "Behold! what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called" (not the servants of God, angels are his servants) "the sons of God." "If sons, then heirs with Christ to His glorious and eternal inheritance," neither of which we

ever could have been, had we not sinned and been redeemed.

The angels recognize the wonderful change redemption has effected in our status. Since Christ has ascended with our nature, they fear and positively refuse to receive the same homage from man that they were accustomed to receive under the former dispensation of the church, because they now have ocular demonstration that man is exalted above them, and rightly understand that he will judge them.

It was otherwise before the Incarnation of Jesus. It was esteemed lawful, under the former economy of the church, to worship angels, not as though they were God, but simply to offer the homage due superiors from inferiors. Man, then, esteemed angels as a higher class of beings, and angels considered man inferior to themselves. Abraham worshipped the three angels that informed him that Sarah would have a son, and his name should be Isaac. Lot worshipped the two angels that informed him of the approaching fate of Sodom. This seems to have been the custom of the Jews, and the angels received their homage in the name of the Lord God of Hosts.

But after the Incarnation and the ascension of Christ, who carried our nature above angels, they positively refused to receive the same kind of worship that was so common under the law—that is, before we were exalted in Christ, our Head, above

them. We have clear and unequivocal proof of this fact in the Apocalypse of St. John: "When the Lord God sent His angel to show unto His servant the things which must shortly be done, and John having seen these things, he, according to the custom of the Jews, "fell down to worship the angel," because he was still ignorant of the change the ascension of our nature in the person of Christ had wrought in the relative dignity of this nature. But he was immediately reproved by the angel and forbidden to worship him. "Then said he unto me, See thou do it not: I am thy fellow-servant, and of thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus; worship God; for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy." "Worship God." He only is worthy of it, and you are his brother. Thus, it is evident that the angel of the Lord was afraid to receive the same worship under the New Testament, that he did under the Old, and we can imagine no other reason than that he felt and appreciated his inferiority, and was cognizant of the fact that man is to judge him. "Christ took not on him the nature of angels." This they have always understood. They have from the beginning been conscious that they were nothing more than His servants, hence their willing obedience when he commands them, "Go and minister unto those who are the heirs of salvation." "Guardian angels watch our slumbers." Angels hover around the couch of the dying saint. Angels escort the

ransomed home. Angels rejoice to see a prodigal return. Why is all this? Since Christ took not on him their natures, they have not been redeemed? Perhaps it is because they watched and wondered at all His work and sorrows and sufferings to redeem man. They love God, and rejoice in seeing His atonement work so well.

It is the opinion of some learned and pious men, that the atonement has, in some way, reached the angels in a manner that has confirmed them in holiness. As the Bible is silent on this subject, I deem it safest and best, not to express an opinion, lest I might be charged by the Almighty, with "being wise above what is written." If God deemed it best to remain silent on this subject, it would be no matter of astonishment to me, if all men should remain silent.

But this much is revealed, God has exalted man in Christ, above angels and they recognize the fact. We ought, therefore, above all other creatures of God, be the most thankful, and should be continually praising Him. Sin is not an adequate cause why we should be unduly troubled, because (figuratively speaking) it was sin that brought a Redeemer into the world; sin created an Advocate; sin drove man from Eden, but it, at the same time, drew Christ from the Throne; sin threw man into prison, but Christ nailed it to his cross, opened the prison doors and carried man up to heaven. Therefore, let all

men rejoice. They now have an Advocate, and one that never sleeps. Though guilty sinners, yet there is no strange fatality binding us to the pillars of eternal despair. "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world" (it was already condemned) "but that the world, through him, might be saved." "He (the sinner) that believeth on Him is not condemned." What a wonderful adaptability of grace to sinners, has been made and secured by the atonement wrought out by the blessed Jesus. "He hath redeemed us with His own most precious blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God."

We pass on to the consideration of another grand achievement of redemption, in which all the redeemed will rejoice and give praises to all eternity. It is this, viz.: The superadding of a third principle, or part to our original nature, which the Bible calls "spirit," "new birth," "new nature," in such a way as not to destroy our identity, nor in the least, abridge our natural capacities. Grace does not propose to take a fool, and make him a philosopher, nor does it propose to take a philosopher and make him a fool.

The presence of the "new birth," or "new nature," neither restrains nor enlarges man's natural

capacities and powers. It devotes itself, not to the intellectual, but to the carnal, and is an antidote for all our "spiritual diseases."

Man, when first created, was perfect and complete, though his person consisted of only two parts, soul and body. But in redemption, he acquired a third part, or as Dr. Taylor, of Ireland, (to whom I am much indebted for suggestions, etc.,) expresses it: "A spiritual and celestial nature was breathed into him, and the "old man," (I. E.) the old or original constitution is now the least part of man, (Christian) and in its proper operations, is dead or dying; but the "new nature" or "new man" is that which gives life, motion and proper actions to a Christian, and which is renewed in us "day by day." So "we have now the spirit put into us, and is a part of us," and whose function is to "produce actions of holy life, as the soul in the body produces actions of natural life."

"This 'new nature' or 'spirit', does not constitute a separate principle or thing different from the man, but constitutes him a 'new man' without displacing either constituent of his original nature, or changing the relative positions of soul and body. 'This new nature' becomes a part of our being, just as essentially as the soul is a part of our being, or the body is a part of our being. And this 'new nature,' which constitutes the man, a Christian or 'new creature' can no more be taken out of him, and the

man continue to breathe natural life, than can the soul depart the body and the body live on unimpaired. The 'spirit' or 'new birth' is so incorporated into our very being as to become a part of our being as essentially, as the blood is a part of our being, or the body and the soul, are parts of our being." It is because of this fact, that Christ and His Apostles insist so strongly and pertinaciously upon the truth of the absolute security of the believer.

"You can conceive of the heart being expelled the body, by impure blood, and the man live on in perfect health, just as easily as you can conceive of the 'spirit' or 'new nature' which is the perfective part of our very selves, being expelled by moral pollution, and the man remain perfectly whole. My arm could be amputated without maiming my person, just as easily as the 'new birth' or 'spirit' could be expelled, without injury and death to my natural life. If you take off my arm, you take from me a part of my being, a part of my person; so, too, if the 'new nature' leaves me, it carries the larger part of my being with it, just as if my soul and body, were to leave my limbs, would take the greater part of my person with them." In view of these facts, we can but exclaim, how wonderful, in all its workings, is the scheme of redemption. It is the embodiment of infinite knowledge and wisdom, articulating themselves in strains of boundless love and superabounding grace. It is the divine ar-

rangement whereby all the glory accrues to God, and all the benefits to man. We know nothing of the perfection of beauty that sat enthroned upon the mountains, nor the sweet lays of minstrelsy that breathed from nature's harp o'er dale and valley, ere sin rolled its billows of vile pollution, to curse the world; but we do know, to what heights of bliss and glory the hand of our Redeemer lifts the believer; we do know that the radiance and glory, that circle the heaven of the Redeemed, and flash their lustre through the many mansions—far excel, in sweetness—loveliness and beauty, pure creation as it rolled from the plastic hand of the great Creator. To God be all the praise for Redemption, and may the goodness of the Lord lead all who read these pages to repentance, faith and new obedience.

It is the glory of Redemption that it is all of God and not contingent, in any degree, upon the sentiment or feelings of the redeemed. Union with Christ, like the branches' union with the vine, is an everlasting union, and the joys of Christ are the joys of the redeemed. Surely, the "new nature" is the production of God, else such sublime results could not follow.

This truth, the "new nature" becoming a part and the largest and most important part of our being, furnishes the only key to the right interpretation of much of the Scriptures, and especially of the

eighth and ninth chapters of the epistle to the Romans.

On what other hypothesis can these texts from the eighth chapter be interpreted? "But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you," (i. e.,) dwells in you as the blood dwells in the veins, or the heart dwells in the body; dwell, in such a way as to be a part of our being, as the blood and heart are parts of our being. "Now, if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His." "And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin." ("the body," (i. e.) the old constitution, if it is spiritually a corpse, it would hardly be possible for it to effect the expulsion of the "Spirit" which is life) "but the Spirit is life because of Righteousness." "For ye have not received the Spirit of bondage to fear, but ye have received the Spirit of adoption." "The Spirit itself," i. e., the "new birth," the "new creature" born of the Holy Ghost in us, "beareth witness with our Spirit" or "soul" or "judgment" "that we are the children of God," and also, if children, then heirs with Christ to his glorious and eternal inheritance.

Thus, it is apparent, that the believer in Jesus has two natures—the "old," which he had in creation and in the Fall, and the "new," which was wrought out by Christ, in His atonement, and begotten in him by the regeneration of the Holy Spirit.

Though our "outward man" perish, the "inward man" is renewed day by day. The "outward man" is the old nature, and the "inward man" is the new nature.

The old nature is always trying to assert its supremacy, and the believer does the things he ought not to do. The "new nature" asserts its supremacy, and the believer does the things he ought to do. When the Christian does wrong, as so frequently happens, he is under the influence of the "old nature;" when he does the things commanded, he is controlled by the "new nature." Christian experience is that the two natures are always in conflict; and the word of God fully corroborates the testimony of experience. "The flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary the one to the other; so that ye cannot do the things that ye would."

It is very evident that the "old man" is neither changed nor destroyed when we are created anew in Christ Jesus. This is fully testified to by the experience of every Christian, as well as by the clear teachings of the Bible. The "new nature," however, invariably triumphs in the end. It conquers, and it conquers gloriously. So not a single believer can fail to wear the victor's crown. Redemption is greater than creation; the "new man" is grander than the "old."

The Fall was an awful calamity, but just such a

calamity as alone could pave the way for such a redemption, and offer such rewards to the redeemed.

While considering the Fall of man and all the horrible consequences thereof, we tremble; our knees smite together and our souls sink within us. But when we open our ears to the sweet music of redemption, and hear first the soft vibratings of the chords of Jesus' love, and then the swelling by degrees of the symphony of the accents of salvation, till they burst in thunder tones into the sublimest anthems that heaven's orchestra can offer at the throne of the Redeemer, then peace, like a river, flows through every avenue of the soul, and "joy," born of the Holy Ghost, lifts and floats us above this seething caldron of sin and iniquity and bears us onward and upward, till it mingles with that "joy" "which is in the presence of the Angels," and which fills the bosom of the Lamb when He sees "one sinner repenting." It is only in the realization of our union with Jesus, that our hearts beat in loving unison with His, and the "sweet comfort of peace" softly breathes o'er the harp-strings of the soul, strengthening and encouraging us to trust all our interests for time and eternity into His loving and Omnipotent hand. As "light makes darkness visible," so a true understanding of the terribleness of the Fall, shows us the magnitude of redemption, and thrills our being at the thought of

being "counted worthy" to participate in its eternal and glorious provisions.

Then the realization of the fact that our treasure is in heaven, and our sins only in this life; that heaven is our home, while on earth we are plodding pilgrims; that here we sow, yonder we reap; that in this world is all the darkness that the Fall can throw around us; that in heaven there is no need of sun, moon or stars, Christ being the light; nerves every energy to do the will of God; speeds our feet in the straight and narrow path; breeds every impulse to holy living; anchors our hopes within the vail, and causes that sweet sleep and calm repose of God's children, while being tossed by the hand of sin on the billows of bereavement and sorrow. Loving Jesus, thou great Redeemer, thou art precious to the redeemed.

CHAPTER II.

SINNERS SAVED BY CHRIST'S RIGHTEOUSNESS "ONLY."

The fall of man, by transgression, was the occasion of all the displays of the divine wisdom, goodness and mercy in the methods of grace. It was the dark back-ground of the splendid picture of Redemption, defining all its outlines, bringing out the whole in bold relief, and presenting it in the precise light that revealed most clearly the heart of the

loving Jesus, and his estimate and appreciation of the worth of the immortal soul.

The fall plays a large part in God's plans and purposes; and when viewed in connection with redemption, it rises in importance, to an elevated plane, and relates itself to both God and man, in such a way, that God is honored, and man infinitely blest.

Man sinned for God's glory and man's good. Not that Adam's purpose was to honor God by sinning. No. His motives were the opposite; but it was God's purpose to honor Adam, and through him, as the Federal Head, to honor all his posterity who will believe. Adam sinned; Jesus hath redeemed. Both works are accomplished.

Now, the question forces itself upon us, with tremendous power, can sinners, as sinners, be made the beneficiaries of Christ's obedience, of Christ's redemption? If so, how, or by what means? It is evident that we cannot be saved by our own obedience, for the law, which is pure and holy, can only be obeyed by the sinless.

Before answering the all-important question asked, it may be best to define more clearly, the particular Righteousness that saves the sinner who believes. There are two kinds of righteousness: first, a righteousness which is the result of obedience to law, which is imputed, and saves. Second, inherent righteousness, which cannot be imputed,

any more than holiness can, and therefore is not saving in its nature.

God created Adam holy and righteous; the righteousness was inherent, consequently could not save him, much less save his posterity. The only righteousness that saves the soul, is the result of obedience to law. Hence, the impossibility of God creating this kind of righteousness, and the necessity of putting Adam under law, so that by obeying, he would secure the kind of righteousness that could be imputed, and save his posterity, as well as himself.

To put it in a still stronger light: apart from the idea of the atonement, Jesus Christ was not righteous. There never was a time when He was unrighteous, for his righteousness was inherent. As the Son of God, He is not the Saviour. He must be "made a Saviour,"—how? By being made under law. What law? The "moral law," the law written on Adam's heart, and afterwards on Mt. Sinai, was traced by the finger of God on tables of stone. It was emphatically the law for the "pure" and "holy." It is not the law, by obedience to which, the sinner is saved. For by the deeds of the law no flesh living can be justified, because all flesh now, is sinful flesh. Every moment that Adam maintained his integrity, the law said, "Adam, you are doing right." There was, therefore, during the time he was obedient, righteousness accumulating

for himself and for his posterity. When he sinned, he lost his righteousness, which was the result of his obedience, and as God purposed to save by righteousness, and in no other way, the future became all blackness and darkness. For through his sin "all the world has become guilty before God." If, therefore, the obedience of Christ to the law, cannot, by some wise and just arrangement, become ours, as truly as though we, ourselves, had obeyed the law as fully and perfectly as He obeyed, then we are left without the possibility of salvation; our condition as sinners, can only become worse and worse, and, of necessity, we are doomed to endless despair.

But, thanks to our great Redeemer, His redemption, His atonement, not only supposed such an arrangement possible, but created the arrangement and affixed to it divine obligations in such a way, that now it is impossible that the sinner who fulfills the sinner's obligation, which is, "believe in the Lord Jesus Christ," can possibly fail to receive all the benefits of Christ's obedience, because, God has obligated himself to give all these.

To illustrate: Forgiveness does not follow repentance as a logical sequence, as effect follows cause. Apart from redemption, or if there had been no atonement made, the sinner might have repented every hour of his life for having transgressed the law of God, still he would not have been forgiven.

But in the atonement, Christ effected an arrangement, and obligated himself to make it efficient, whereby forgiveness is bound to repentance with such chords as render it impossible now for the sinner to repent and not be forgiven. Hence, there were "times of ignorance at which God winked," but He winks no longer, for man now has positive proof of a perfect, finished atonement.

"Now He commands all men everywhere to repent, because he hath appointed a day in the which He will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom He hath ordained; whereof He hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead."

The resurrection of Jesus is the indisputable evidence that the atonement is finished, and that it is now true that every penitent must be forgiven, and if forgiven, must be glorified in heaven. So now, one of the achievements of redemption is the perfecting of an arrangement whereby all Christ's obedience to the law shall be accounted to us as if it were our own personal obedience, and that by it, we being sinners still, are nevertheless saved.

As this doctrine of Imputed Righteousness is fundamental in our religion, it cannot be too clearly understood nor too greatly appreciated. We will, therefore, offer one more illustration: A man involves himself in debt far beyond his ability to pay.

The law is no respecter of persons. He is by law thrust into prison. While languishing there, he might deeply regret having involved himself; but that regret does not meet the demands of the law, and only the meeting of the law's demands can satisfy the creditor. It is the money, and not the man, that the creditor wants, and he invokes the law to get it for him. The law can do two things: First, make the debtor pay the debt, if he has the means. Secondly, if he refuses to pay, then it can hold him a prisoner. Some friend comes forward and pays the debt in full. The creditor is satisfied; the majesty of the law is vindicated; the prison door is opened, and the real debtor is as free and as innocent in the eye of the law as if he had paid the debt himself.

Precisely analogous is the sinner's condition. He is in debt to God beyond his ability to pay. The law has cast him into prison. Perfect obedience is the debt due to God the Father. He demands it, and will be satisfied with nothing less. Jesus Christ came forward and voluntarily paid the debt. He rendered a perfect obedience. The Father accepts it; but his law has been broken, and the penalty for that crime is death. Jesus Christ ascended Calvary and suffered the death penalty. The majesty of the law is now vindicated. The only condition that Christ imposes is that the sinner in prison will believe that He (Christ) obeyed the law perfectly

for him (in his stead) and paid the full amount of its penalty. The moment the sinner believes this his prison doors are opened and he is free. He is that moment taken from under the law and put under grace; "He can never again come into condemnation, but is passed from death unto life." For Christ obeyed once for all and paid the penalty once for all. As Christ is eternal, His obedience is eternal. The penalty of the law is eternal death; Christ's death was a full satisfaction. Everything He does bears the stamp of eternity.

Now, it becomes plain that the *result* of Christ's obedience to the law is *the* righteousness that saves sinners. How do we come into the possession of it? Christ himself imputes it, and we receive it by faith alone. There is no doctrine of the Word insisted upon more strenuously and illustrated more frequently and clearly than this.

It was the purpose of God from all eternity to save man by righteousness, and not by "holiness," "goodness," or "worthiness." The "righteousness" that saves is not an essential characteristic of Deity. Holiness is essential to his existence; but God never proposed to save man by Adam's holiness (for he created him holy) nor by His own. The purpose was to save him by righteousness.

As righteousness is the result of obedience to law, it is evident that God did not create man righteous, (except inherently.) Hence the necessity that He

should create him under law, that he might by obeying become righteous.

God constituted Adam the Federal Head, as well as the representative of all his posterity, in order that his obedience could be accounted to his seed for their obedience. Thus Adam's righteousness, had he continued his obedience, would have been imputed to his posterity, and God would have dealt with all his descendants as though each one had obeyed the law personally as perfectly as Adam had done. Adam was the only human creature that God ever put on trial, and though holy, see how he failed. Not one of his posterity was ever put on trial. We are not on trial now. Saith the Scriptures, "He that believeth is not condemned, but he that believeth not is condemned already." The man who has been arraigned before a jury of his peers for a crime that is capital by the law of the land, and has been proven guilty, and the court has passed sentence of death upon him, fixed the day of his execution, and thrust him into prison to await that day, that man is not on trial; he is already condemned. Analogous is the condition of all the human family in a state of nature. They all "sinned in Adam and fell in his transgression;" they were proven guilty and the sentence of condemnation is already passed.

All the while Adam maintained his integrity, the law said, "Adam, you are doing right," and the result of his right-doing was the particular righteous-

ness to save him and all his seed. He had the ability to obey the law. He was both pure and holy; yet, notwithstanding his ability to do right, he did wrong. With the full knowledge of his representative character, holding in his hand the destiny, for weal or woe, of all human kind, he willfully and daringly transgressed the law and invoked the dread penalty upon himself and his seed. The only road to eternal felicity is now blocked; mere human obedience is a failure, and unborn millions shall feel the curse of sin. All is darkness, gloom and death. He who was created in the image of God, and for a season held such sweet converse with his Maker, is driven from the Eden of delight, and his ear, only accustomed to the concord of sweet sounds, is filled with the ringing curses, "by the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread;" "dust thou art and unto dust shalt thou return."

Was the purpose of God to save man by righteousness thwarted by Adam's fall? No! God never purposed that Adam, the creature, should be the saviour of mankind. He purposed that Christ should be their Saviour. "What the law could not do, in that it was weak, through Adam (through the flesh), God sending His own Son in the likeness of (Adam) sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh, that the righteousness of the law might appear in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit."

Christ, as the Son of God, is not the Saviour, but he was made a Saviour by being "made under law." What law? The very law under which Adam was placed, and which he transgressed. The moral law. While obeying, the law said: "Christ, you are doing right." As He obeyed perfectly, the law said: "You have done perfectly right." Therefore, the result of that perfect obedience was a perfect righteousness.

Christ has become our second Adam—our second Federal Head and representative in law. If the first Adam had continued obedient, we would have been saved by his righteousness, the result of his obedience. But he sinned, fell, and lost his righteousness, consequently, we, having none of our own, were doomed. But Christ undertook what "angels could not do." He obeyed, and now says to Adam and all his seed: "If you will believe that my obedience to the law is just as good as Adam's could possibly have been, had he never sinned, I will save you, as though you had never committed a single sin. If you believe that I obeyed, not for myself, but for you personally, you shall have the full benefit of all my righteousness, as though you had personally obeyed, and as perfectly as I have done."

Now, it is clear that if Adam had maintained his integrity, we would not have been saved by our own righteousness, but by his; so now, if we believe that the Lord Jesus obeyed the law for us, we are saved

by his righteousness and not by our own. Then the purpose of God to save men by righteousness was not thwarted by the first transgression, but through that event the way was opened for the Son of God to become the Saviour. Further, the perfect obedience of Adam, had he continued obedient, could only have met the law's demands; it could not have elevated him and his seed to a higher plane; consequently, Eden would have continued forever to be his home. Christ's obedience was not only a satisfaction, or satisfying of the law, but it was a magnifying of the law just to the extent of the superiority of God to the creature. Had Christ been only equal to man in every sense, the law would have accepted him as man's substitute, but in that event, his obedience would only have satisfied the law; whereas, since he is infinitely superior to man, His obedience magnifies the law to an infinite degree. In other words, heaven is just as far superior to Eden as Christ's obedience is superior to Adam's, had he never sinned, or as God is superior to man. Adam's obedience would have kept him in Eden; Christ's carries us up to heaven; exalts us above "principalities and powers;" constitutes us judges of angels, and makes us sons of God, and "if sons, then heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ to His eternal inheritance." Jesus saves us by His righteousness, which is the result of His obedience unto the law.

It is an established fact that imputed righteousness saves all things in the world for the time being. Unbelievers could not draw a single breath without it. The world could not stand an hour but for it. To illustrate this truth, the Bible records many examples, a few of which, clearly understood, will suffice to show how it is imputed and how it saves :

First. At the expiration of the first two thousand years of the world's history, God found that the corruption and wickedness of the human family were very great. "Sin" was about finished, and therefore wholesale death was righteously determined upon. The Scriptures say that "sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death," so because the wickedness of men was great and well-nigh universal, God determined to sweep the world to ruin with a flood of waters. His omniscient eye discovered one, and only one believer, amid the surging mass of sinking millions; only one solitary witness to the truth was living on the earth. God said, "Noah, thee only have I found pure ?" No. Holy? No. Good ? No. Noah was far from being pure, holy, or good. "Thee only have I found righteous." Noah was righteous, if he was not pure, holy, or good, for God said so ; for he believed in Jesus, and his righteousness was imputed unto him and received by faith. "With thee will I establish my covenant." "Make an ark for the saving of thyself and house," for I have determin-

ed to sweep man from the face of the earth with a flood of waters. The ark was about one hundred and twenty years in building. What saved the world for these one hundred and twenty years from the billows of the flood? Noah's righteousness. Did not God treat with each and every antediluvian, as far as the curse of the flood was concerned, as though each one was as righteous as Noah? Was it not for Noah's sake? Noah's righteousness kept back the flood for one hundred and twenty years. Was he not the saviour of all men from this particular curse for that space of time? In other words, the human family—the world—was saved all these years by Noah, not for their own sakes, but for Noah's sake.

The ark was finished, and God said, "Come thou, Noah, and all thy house into the ark." "And the Lord shut him in." Noah's righteousness must go with him, consequently must be withdrawn from the world. When the Lord shut the door of the ark, Noah was, to all intents and purposes, out of the world; hence, the fountains of the great deep were broken up, and the windows of heaven were opened, and the whole world was swept to ruin. What broke up the fountains of the great deep? What opened the windows of heaven? The want of righteousness which alone saves temporarily as well as eternally.

The question naturally arises, if Noah was the only righteous man, or person, on the earth, what right had his wife in the ark? She was not righteous. She had a covenant right. She was "bone of Noah's bone and flesh of his flesh," by the law of marriage. What right had Shem, Ham and Japheth to enter the ark? They were not in themselves righteous, but they were embraced in the covenant by being the sons of Noah. What right had their wives to come into the ark? They were not righteous. They were the daughters-in-law of Noah, and therefore were included in the covenant. The covenant embraced his whole house. If Noah's wife had married any other man on the earth, she would never have found an Ararat; she would have gone down in the flood. Not, however, because being the wife of any other man would have made her more wicked and hell-deserving than she was, but because she would have been outside of the covenant. God means something when He says, "Be ye not unequally yoked with unbelievers." It is exceedingly dangerous. But if, perchance, you are, then "the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband," else their children are unclean.

If Noah's sons had been any other father's sons, they had never found a place in the ark. They had been drowned in the flood.

It is a mistaken idea to suppose that the children of believing parents stand on the same platform before God with the children of unbelieving parents; yet this idea prevails largely, both in the church and in the world. Noah's sons were saved from the curse of the flood, not because they were better than the sons of any other father, but because they were the children of that particular covenant God made with righteous Noah. If it were possible that I did not desire to be saved and crowned in heaven myself, and yet possible for me to be a Christian, I would be a Christian for my children's sake. I would bring them into covenant relation with God. God demands it, and no parent has even the shadow of right to refuse compliance with the demand.

Where the welfare of the individual only is concerned, he may afford to be governed by a sentiment or an opinion, and if it be wrong, he only suffers. But for a parent to be controlled by an opinion of his own, which opinion is in the face of, and directly contrary to, the express command of God, and also to the genius of the gospel, that causes him to ignore the paternal relation on its Christian side, by refusing to bring his children into covenant relation with God, so that they can rightly enjoy all the privileges of this relation and participate in all the benefits thereof, is doubly criminal before God, in that he is guilty of personal disobedience and has also sinned against his offspring.

Noah's children were included in the covenant God made with him, and therefore they escaped the curse of the flood. If the wives of these three sons of Noah had married any other father's sons, they had never found an Ararat, for the simple reason that they had been outside of covenant relation. The question I now ask is this: Did not Noah's righteousness save his whole family from the destruction of the flood? Did not his wife, his sons and his sons' wives find an Ararat as truly and as surely as Noah did? Did not Noah and his family stem the same billows together in perfect safety?

Now, it must be true that neither Noah's wife, his sons nor his sons' wives had anything of their own that could possibly have secured their temporal salvation from the curse of the flood. They were not righteous, for God said so. Then it follows as a logical sequence that Noah's righteousness was imputed to them, and they were treated with by the Almighty as though each one had been as righteous as Noah. Now, if Noah's righteousness, by virtue of the covenant God made with him personally, could and did cause his ungodly, unworthy household to ride the billows of the flood and find an Ararat of safety and life, cannot, and will not, the Righteousness of Christ, by virtue of the covenant of grace, cause all, who are included in that covenant, unworthy and hell-deserving though they be, to stem the billows of God Almighty's anger and

wrath and find the heaven of eternal safety prepared for all who love Him?

The conclusion is overwhelming that Noah's family was saved from the curse of the flood, not for their own sakes, but for Noah's sake. So believing sinners are saved, not for their own sakes, but for Christ's sake. As Noah's righteousness was imputed to his household, and saved them from the temporal curse, so Christ's righteousness, imputed to believers, saves them from the billows of God's anger against sin eternally. In all this, do we not see a most beautiful and forcible illustration of how God saves sinners, they being sinners still? The believer is saved the moment he exercises saving faith in God, but that very moment he is as great a sinner as he ever was. His status toward God, however, is changed. He is taken out from under law and put under grace, but he is a sinner still. Every moment the homicide was out of the city of refuge he was in danger of losing his life by law. The moment he entered the city he was safe, though he was the same homicide. Getting into the city did not make him any the less a man-slayer, but changed his relations to the law. None but God could have devised, as none but God could have revealed so plainly, the glorious scheme of Redemption. Let every sinner love, let every tongue praise Him.

The Bible furnishes us with another very remarkable, as well as forcible, illustration of the divine

method of saving sinners by righteousness, which is very difficult to be misconstrued, and which all who desire light on the subject should study carefully. It is the following:

God looked down from heaven upon Sodom and Gomorrah. What was the result of that look? He determined to destroy both those cities, together with the other cities of the plain, with fire and brimstone. How great must have been their wickedness to call for such retribution! Faithful Abraham's soul was stirred to its depths when he learned of this determination, and he immediately began his intercessions on behalf of the cities. Did he begin by saying, "Lord, if I can find fifty pure, good or worthy men, will you spare the cities?" No. He knew there was not a "pure," "good" or "worthy" man in Sodom. Besides, Abraham knew that God never saves individuals nor cities because of personal goodness or worthiness, but only by righteousness, and that not their own, but Christ's. Hence he prayed, "Lord, if I can find fifty righteous men in Sodom, what will you do?" "I will spare all the cities for their sakes." "If five be lacking, what will you do?" "I will spare all the cities for the forty-five's sakes." "Lord, if there be found thirty?" "I will spare the cities for the thirty's sake." "Lord, if there be found twenty?" "I will not destroy for twenty's sake." "Lord, be not angry; I will speak only this once more. If ten

righteous men be found in the cities, what will you do?" "I will not destroy them for 'ten's' sake."

Had there been found ten righteous persons in Sodom, would the cities of the plain have been destroyed with fire and brimstone? Never, for God said so. Why not? Because the righteousness of the ten would have been imputed to every man, woman and child, and God would have dealt with each and all as though they had been as righteous as the ten, not for their own sake, but for the sake of the ten.

There could be found, however, but one righteous man, and that was Lot. He was very far from being "sinless," "pure" or "worthy," but he was a righteous man, for God said so. God commanded Lot to go out of the city, but he would not obey. He was commanded the second time to depart the city, but he refused to go. Lot knew his power. He knew that the safety of the cities depended upon his personal presence.

What was keeping the fire and brimstone from falling from heaven and consuming them? Lot's righteousness. Aye! each Sodomite and Gomorrahite was indebted to Lot for every breath of fresh air they breathed. God can't destroy righteousness. He purposed from all eternity that it should save, and His purposes never change. They may have all scoffed and pointed the finger of scorn at Lot. They may have all thought him a fool or fanatic for

The world, in its madness, may scoff at the church; may throw obstacles in the way of her progress; may deny that her mission is divine; may ridicule the divinely-appointed means whereby sinners are blest; may say that her pretensions are preposterous, her promises chimerical, her demands nonsensical, her existence precarious, her foundation rotten, and that she is upheld only by fools and fanatics, nevertheless, it is true that every unbeliever is kept out of perdition every moment by her; that whatever of peace, joy, prosperity and happiness they may possess, for every iota thereof, they are indebted to the church. I would warn every unbeliever that ere you raise your right hand to strike the church, let that hand forget its cunning; ere you speak aught against God's church, "let your tongue cleave to the roof of your mouth."

The church is Christ's bride, dear unto Him as the "apple of His eye," more beautiful than the lilies of the valley, and sweeter far than the perfume of Eden's bowers. Your madness is folly, your endeavors vain. Turn you to the gates of Zion while mercy lingers; believe in the Jesus of the church, and his grace of pardon, full and free, will flow as a river. Believe God. The church is the "salt of the world," and saves it from immediate destruction.

As we advance along the line of Christianity to-

wards, and approach the end of the world, the Omnipotence of righteousness becomes more and more palpable. What will be in the end is true this moment.

Should the Lord Jehovah come now in clouds of glory, accompanied by the angel throng, and change every believer and every infant in the "twinkling of an eye," and carry them all up to heaven, the world would still be preserved by righteousness. It would be indebted, however, to the cemeteries for every moment it remained out of burnings. God cannot, will not, destroy righteous dust. Hence the necessity for the righteous to rise in the first resurrection. All righteousness must be lifted from the earth before it is possible, according to God's plan, that the world can be destroyed. "Blessed (not will be blest) and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection."

It is patent to every reflecting mind that believers are the only real benefactors of the world. Noah's family did not benefit him; he benefited them. The Sodomites did not keep back the fire and brimstone from consuming Lot, but Lot kept them back from consuming Sodom as long as he remained in the city. The church owes no debt of gratitude to the world, but the world owes everything to the church. O world! pay that thou owest ere the wrath of God, already kindled and quivering on the sword of eternal justice, will leap from its hiding-place and

curse you with fire everlasting. God hath spoken it.

The righteousness of Christ, appropriated by faith, not only obviates the necessity of sinners obeying the law for themselves, or paying its penalty, but is a sure guarantee that they do now and shall forever participate in all the benefits of Christ's redemption.

The indwelling of the Holy Spirit, who "works within us to will and to do of God's good pleasure," is no longer a doubtful theory, or wild speculation of a phrenzied brain, but is a pleasing, conscious reality that legitimately follows the exercise of a living faith. Thus, being daily and hourly taught the "things that make for peace," by this indwelling person of the God-head, who bears "witness with our spirits that we are sons of God," are marked plainly the ways of wisdom, and our experience is, they are pleasantness, and all her paths, and we can testify, that they are peace.

Thus our bodies become the temples of the Holy Ghost, and our immortality enjoys tender union and sweet communion with Him; and ever watchful of our highest interests, He strengthens for every conflict, nerves us to resist every foe, and directs our feet in the ways of righteousness. Though our adversaries be powerful, He is Omnipotent; though they be wise and cunning, He is Omniscient; hence the positive assurance that the powers of hell can never "prevail against us."

Do we need a stronger faith? He works it. A brighter hope? He inspires it. A clearer way? He shines upon it. An inward consciousness of pardoned sin? He creates it. A firmer conviction of our union with Jesus? He gives it. It is no longer a question whether the Christ of the Bible is our Redeemer, for He takes the "things of Christ and showeth them unto us."

The law of God, it is evident, must be obeyed. Christ obeyed it; Adam while innocent could and did obey it, and had he never transgressed, it would forever have justified him. "By the law no flesh" living can be justified now. Why? Because no flesh living is innocent. "All the world has become guilty." Believers are still sinners; and while they are no longer "debtors to the law," still they are under weighty obligations to obey the commands of Christ, and it is this obedience that marks them, indeed and in truth, the "sons of God." Believers, though sinners, can obey these commands. "Crucify the flesh with all its lusts." "Go, work to-day in my vineyard." "Come out from the world and be separate from it." "Let your light so shine that others seeing your good works may glorify our Father in heaven." "Confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus." "Do this in remembrance of me." "Cease to do evil and learn to do well." It is commands like these that the disciple is required to obey. And it is by such works of obedience

that he proves his faith. So, notwithstanding the believer is not saved by "purity," "goodness" or "worthiness," still he becomes purer, better and more worthy every day that he lives. He is under obligation to obey all the commands of Christ, and at the same time is assured that having "obeyed all" he is still an "unprofitable servant."

The question is often asked, if obeying the commands of Christ does not make us "profitable servants," what is the use of obeying? The answer is, personal righteousness cannot save a soul, yet no soul can be saved without it. It is the effect of the saving cause. A cause will produce an effect as certainly as an effect is the result of a cause. "Purity," "goodness" and increasing "worthiness" are the effects of the believer's obedience to gospel commands, while his redemption is the result of Christ's obedience to the law of God.

Say not, then, because you are saved by Christ's obedience, there is no obedience required of you. The very fact that Christ did for you what you could not do for yourself brings you under everlasting obligation to obey all His commands, and His commandments are not grievous. Therefore, "what your hands find to do, do it with all your might." It is God's purpose that in the "doing His will, you shall know of the doctrine." "Why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things I command you?" "Ye are my friends if ye do whatsoever I command

you." The evidence of your discipleship must be given by yourself, and not by your maker, and the most incontrovertible of all evidence is the "doing with all your might what your hands find to do."

While God Himself is "incomprehensible" and "His ways past finding out," still there is enough clearly revealed, both of Himself and His purposes concerning His creature, man, to thrill with admiration every heart, and cause to roll from every tongue the sweetest anthems of praise. His *wisdom* that shines so gloriously, in all the vast and varied designs of the material universe, is grandly eclipsed by the *goodness* and *mercy* that tint His designs in His sublimer redemption. In the one, wisdom shines. In the other, mercy shadows. "He that dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty." Wisdom and power are seen in the one; wisdom, love and mercy are seen in the other.

Redemption is far grander than creation. Hence the divinely-perfected arrangement, whereby "God can be just and justify the ungodly," is not only worthy of our admiration, but of our gratitude and our heart. Then appropriate Christ's righteousness; entwine the tendrils of your affections around it, and it shall cover you as with a garment; and relying solely on this, and nothing else, your barque may be tossed by the waves of vile pollution, and the thunders of God's law may roll around you, yet

within your bosom shall reign a peace that the tempests of sin without can never disturb. "When we are weak, then are we strong." No hope in self; all confidence in God.

Let every heart inscribe on its "motives," "designs" and "activities," "*The Lord our Righteousness.*"

CHAPTER III.

EXPEDIENCY OF CHRIST'S DEPARTURE FROM THE WORLD.

The Fall and Redemption, according to the Divine plan, necessitated the incarnation of the only begotten Son of God. He must take on Himself, not the nature of Angels, then, he could have remained with the Angels in heaven, but the "seed of Abraham," now, he must be visibly present in the world, the home of Abraham. When, therefore, inspiration tells us that it was needful, in order to redeem us, that he should "lay His glory by," leave the "home of His Father," and though "rich, must become poor;" "suffer contradiction at the hand of sinners;" be pinched with hunger; have "not where to lay his head;" be persecuted, tempted, buffeted, scoffed at, spit upon, and on the cross lay down his life, be buried in the tomb and rise

again, we get an insight into his heart of hearts, and there read His estimate of the worth of the human soul, His desire for its salvation, and His determination that it shall be glorified.

If the question should arise in any bosom as to whether the redemption of Christ is "precious" or not, let it be answered by considering what God deemed necessary to be done to effect it. God's estimate, not man's, is the true measure of the soul's importance.

Having taken upon Himself the form of a man, having obeyed the law and paid its penalty, and thus having secured man's redemption from the curse of the law, it then became necessary that He should go back to His Father; that his visible presence should depart from men in order that His redemption should be made effectual in the sinner's salvation and glorification. He made, or rather provided, the redemption, and offers it freely, but it was not a part of the divine purpose that He should constrain sinners to appreciate and accept it. Being omnipotent, He could have done so, but He did not choose so to do; and as He did not thus choose, it became necessary that He, after finishing His work, should go away and send the Holy Spirit, the Third person of the God-head, whose office-work, in the divine plan or purpose, was not to make a redemption, but to make *the* redemption of Christ effectual unto the salvation of the sinner.

The Holy Spirit, in the divine purpose, did not make the atonement; that was Christ's work. Neither could Christ apply it; this was the work of the Holy Spirit. Christ told His disciples that the time had come when He must leave them; that He would not talk much more with them. This intelligence filled their hearts with deep sorrow; they could not understand the necessity. They wanted Him to remain to defend them when persecuted; to make their preaching effectual; to subdue all His and their enemies; to refute gain-sayers, and ever cheer them with His presence, and fill them with new and astonishing revelations.

But Christ said, notwithstanding I have made you sorry by announcing my purpose to leave you, nevertheless I tell you the truth, "It is expedient for you," for the church, and for the world, "that I go away, for if I go not away the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send Him unto you. And when He is come, He will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment; of sin, because they believe not on me; of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more; of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged." "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit, when He, the Spirit of Truth, is come, He will guide you into all truth; for He shall not speak of Himself, but whatsoever He shall hear, that shall He speak, and He will

show you things to come. He shall glorify me: for He shall receive of mine, and shall show it unto you."

Christ puts His departure solely on the ground of expediency; not on the ground of desire. The church is His "bride." His love for her is stronger than death. He willingly laid down His life for the church. And if it had been possible that the world could have been brought to a knowledge of the truth under His personal ministry, He would be on the earth preaching to-day. But had He remained, we would now be in the very heart of heathenism. "The gospel's joyful sound" had never reached our ears. It could not have had "free course," for the simple reason that it is not Christ's business to make men admire and appreciate His work of redemption, much less regenerate the soul. This is the work of the Holy Spirit.

Under Christ's ministry souls were regenerated—"were born again" and made "heirs of grace," not, however, by Him, but by the Holy Spirit, the only enlightening and regenerating person of the God-head. Christ never converted any one, or, to speak more correctly, never regenerated a soul. This has ever been the exclusive prerogative of the Holy Spirit.

Says Christ, "If I go not away, this regenerating person of the God-head, the 'Comforter,' will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send Him unto

you;" "and when he is come," he will teach the world three truths, which I cannot teach, and still be consistent with my eternal purpose, but which must be taught and clearly understood before my work of atonement can be made effectual to their salvation, viz.: "Will reprove the world of sin, because they believe not on me; of righteousness, because I go unto the Father; and of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged."

After being thus taught by Christ the great work of the Comforter, and clearly comprehending the instruction, and understanding the reason for his departure, which was in order to send Him, we never more hear any expressions of sorrow or regret on the part of the disciples at his leaving them. They could take him by the hand and bid him a sad, a long farewell, not expecting nor desiring to see him again on the earth. When you leave, send the Comforter, and "peace shall dwell within all our borders, and prosperity within all our palaces." The blessed work of Christ shall by Him be made effectual unto salvation.

The only reason that Christ gave to his disciples why it was necessary for him to depart, "become invisible," was that the Comforter, the regenerating person of the God-head, would not come on any other condition; but there is a philosophical reason also, based upon the very nature of things, which rendered his departure absolutely necessary to the

coming of the Comforter; and this reason, being first clearly apprehended, renders the office-work of the Comforter exceedingly plain and easy to be understood.

It is evident that our mental being is not fitted to the religion of the Bible, but the religion taught by the Bible is fitted to our mental being. Our minds are not adapted to grace, but God has adapted grace to our minds. In other words, the religion of the gospel is adapted to us just as we are, not as we ought to be. God has not re-moulded the mind so as to make it fit the atonement, but He has constructed the atonement to fit the mind as it is. Grace does not weaken or strengthen, or in any way interfere with, a single law of our mental being, nor does it enlarge or contract its capabilities or capacities. Hence, "grace" is not for the innocent, but the guilty; not for the pure, but for the impure. While Adam was in the garden of Eden, he was not in a state of grace, because he was innocent; when he sinned, he fell into a condition in which mercy could be shown him, because he was then guilty. Mercy cannot be shown to the innocent, but to the guilty. "Not the righteous, sinners Jesus came to call." Hence sinners are saved by grace, and none but sinners can be the subjects of it. If it were possible that perfect sanctification, in the sense of freedom from sin, could take place in the Christian (as it does at death), and he live ten years longer on the earth, for this

ten years he would not be a subject of grace any more than the glorified in heaven are. But as grace is fitted to sinners, and sinners only, we understand what the Scriptures mean when they say, "Sinners saved by grace."

"No man liveth and sinneth not;" this settles the question forever.

God, in his infinite wisdom, has so constituted the human mind that it is impossible for us to appreciate fully a blessing while we have it in possession. A poet has said, "Blessings brighten as they take their flight." This is not only a poetic expression, but it is good philosophy and sound theology. Nor is this the result of sin. Adam, while innocent in Eden, could not appreciate the blessing of companionship with God. When he lost it, then he appreciated it. So we cannot appreciate a blessing while we are in possession of it. It must depart in order to be appreciated. A clear comprehension of this mental law will not only exalt our ideas of God's wisdom in making it, but will throw much light upon His purposes, in the precise methods of grace revealed in his word, which otherwise would continue wrapt in a veil of mystery. A few illustrations will suffice to make the thought plain:

The young man, in perfect health and strength, who has never experienced an ache or a pain, has no conception of what a priceless blessing health is, and there is no logic in the world that can make him

understand and appreciate it. He may look upon suffering till his eyes grow dim, he may listen at the groans of the sick and fever-scorched till his ears refuse to hear, and he may nurse the rheumatic till his hands become heavy, still he has learned nothing of the blessings of health by all he has seen, heard or handled. The invalid, however, knows all about its value. He appreciates it fully. Let a number of these invalids read each a lecture to this young man, telling him how wonderfully he is blest, what a priceless thing health is, and each tell the truth, and nothing but the truth, and with all their persuasive powers urge upon him to take every precaution to guard it, and he will turn away and put his health in jeopardy for an hour's pleasure. The lectures of the invalids are all lost on him, for the simple reason that this peculiar mental law totally incapacitates him to understand and appreciate their meaning. And it is well, not only for the young man himself, but for the world and the church, that it is so. This law bears the stamp of infinite wisdom. Suppose all men could appreciate the blessing of health to the same degree that the invalid does: every enterprise in church, State and society would come at once to a dead-lock, and every vocation would languish.

The farmer would consider his health of more value than his crop, and would refuse to "lift," "push" or "drive," for fear of a bodily injury.

The physician would estimate his health at a higher price than his fees, and would refuse to brave the "wind and tide," for if, perchance, by reaching for the less he might lose the greater value. So with each profession and all vocations. Is not God's wisdom wonderfully stamped on this mental law? There is time enough to appreciate the blessing of health after it is gone, for the simple reason that God did not put us in this world to be healthy only. He put us here to work at "whatsoever our hands find to do," and that "with all our might." God gives health and strength to be expended, not to be nursed and too scrupulously guarded. They are but means to an end. Let the invalid revel in his acquired knowledge and appreciation. Such knowledge and appreciation, however, are not for you and me yet. "Work" is our business.

This one illustration would doubtless suffice to make my meaning plain to all statesmen and theologians, but I trust a large number will read these pages who are neither; and as there are so many dark spots in Christian experience that can be illumined and made perfectly clear, I shall add illustrations at the risk of being considered tedious.

The mother, who has borne to the grave her little darling, appreciates the depth of her affections for it now as she could not while it lived. Then she thought she loved it with all the powers of a mother's soul, and she really did. When it first lisped

the name of "Ma, ma," that was the sweetest sound that ever fell upon her ear. When it took its first step alone, that was a thrilling sight; yet, she could leave it for days together, and spend the time most pleasantly with kindred and friends. Scarcely an hour past, however, while absent, but she thought of her babe, but no anxiety was felt.

The child sickens, and to human appearances is nearing its end. Now she begins to realize something of the depth of her affection for it.

Presently, life is despaired of. Now she wonders how it was possible she could have left it for even an hour. It dies and is buried out of sight. Now self-reproach, like burdened billows, comes rolling over her. She supposes that it was the want of maternal affection that caused her to leave it, and if she had only remained at home and cared for it herself, that possibly it might now be living. What is the cause of all this self-reproach and regret? Nothing more than that now she appreciates her affection as she could not possibly do while the child lived. She takes up from memory the accents, "Ma, ma," it first uttered; they are a thousand-fold sweeter than when they fell upon the natural ear. That first step taken alone is now manifold more thrilling than when the natural eye saw it taken. No thought is worth anything until it is first stamped upon the memory and then taken up from thence and considered. Suppose

this mother could have appreciated her child, could have appreciated her affection for it while living like she now can, since it is buried out of sight, it would have totally unfitted her for all the duties of life, would have made this beautiful world a gloomy prison-house of care and anxiety, and instead of the sunshine of joy, the darkness of terrible forebodings would have settled on her countenance and heart. What a mercy that God has constituted our minds so that we cannot appreciate a blessing while we are in the possession of it! In other words, the child must be dead and buried out of sight in order to be fully appreciated. The mother can have no just conception of the depth of her affections till it is gone.

I'm sure this illustration is confirmed by the experience of all bereaved mothers. "Let not your heart be troubled," and reproach not yourselves because of harsh words spoken, or for chastening administered to the loved ones now departed. Your love for them while living was as pure and unsullied as now, but you did not appreciate the fact. While living your great care was for the body—this you felt and appreciated most; but when dead, then thoughts of the neglect of proper anxiety and care for the soul came crowding upon your heart. Let this fact make you diligent to impart religious instruction and win their souls to Christ, mothers, while your children are in health and strength. Many pious mothers exhibit but little concern for the salvation

of their children while the breezes of prosperity are fanning their brows. They can laugh at the smart, if not really blasphemous, speeches, sometimes made in jest, concerning serious things, and think but little about it; but when such a son is called to stand before his God to render his last account, then the bitter tear of reproach scalds the cheek, and rightly, too, because so little care was exercised for the salvation of his soul, and the proper religious instruction was deferred too long.

The grace of benevolence is exercised greatly by our active, zealous, Christian brother. He shows to the community that his heart is in every good cause; he is liberal with his means, and it is patent to every observer that proper motives prompt all his activities. Still he is unable to inspire the community to look through his glasses or pattern after his example. Why? Because benevolence is a grace of the Spirit and the Holy Ghost alone can implant it in the human breast. But does not the Holy Spirit work through means? Does He not use the example of benevolent men as the means through which to open their hearts to the exercise of this grace? Yes; but seldom can he turn the benevolence of a living man to much account, for the simple reason that all living men are sinners, and consequently have their short-comings, failings and idiosyncrasies, and these are what the world sees and appreciates. The world does not look beyond these and perceive the

Christian man. A benevolent man may exercise this grace for years in the community without ever inspiring a kindred spirit in a single individual. But God has decreed that all the weaknesses and shortcomings of His believing children shall be buried with their bones, and then shall loom up the grandeur of their Christian character. Then it is that the benevolence, exercised so long before the eye of the community, is separated from the weaknesses of the man, and is more beautiful than they had ever thought it to be before; and like a beautiful transparency, at whatever angle you view it, it is seen in a more charming light, and the longer it is considered the more fascinating it seems, and in less than five years there will be a number of benevolent people in the community where there was only one before. That benevolent man did more by dying, in five years, than he could possibly have done in fifty by living. A good man must be dead in order to be understood. This possibly is one reason why God has decreed that a "man's works shall follow him." No good man is fully appreciated while he lives.

It is for the same reason and because of the same law of our mental being that Christ Jesus must be out of sight in order to be loved. While he was visible to the natural eye; while his words of warning, encouragement and wisdom were heard by the natural ear, and while his deeds of mercy, sympa-

thy and loving-kindness were witnessed by the multitude, he was pronounced a "traitor," a "blasphemer," an "imposter," a man in "league with Beelzebub." He was persecuted, his good deeds misinterpreted, his character maligned, his motives suspected, and his instructions despised. He died on Calvary, was buried in Joseph's tomb, burst the bands of death and ascended on high. He is now invisible to the natural eye; his natural voice no longer rings on the natural ear; he is gone from sense, and what is the result? Has he an enemy in the world, as a man, to-day? Even infidelity itself admits that he was the purest man, the best man, and the wisest and most benevolent man the world ever saw. His persecutors said, "he did no sin," "neither was guile found in his mouth." And there is not a skeptic living on earth but will bear testimony to the fact that his love for men was boundless, and that not a shadow of suspicion taints his moral character. Why all this revolution of sentiment in the bosom of his enemies? The answer is plain and easy. Christ must be out of sight in order to be appreciated. If you will have no enemies you must do one of two things, either make no personal acquaintances, or you must join the multitude in opposing Christianity. This is the reason why so many men would be Christians in the most exalted sense of the term, but are not, because they dread the world's ridicule. They sac-

rifice principle, conscience and their very souls on the world's altars rather than adopt a system they believe to be divine, which the world despises. Measured by this standard, "he that will not leave father and mother, houses and lands, for my name's sake, is not worthy of me;" such men are certainly "weighed in the balance and found wanting."

Christ must be out of sight in order to be understood, loved and appreciated to the fullest extent. Rather than change this law of mind, he preferred to depart and send the Comforter, who is invisible, and, therefore, being personally present, can make his work effectual to the end for which he wrought it.

Understanding the philosophy of Christ's departure, it is very easy to comprehend the reason he gives: "If I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you."

We are not to understand from this that the Comforter had not been in the world previous to the ascension of Jesus; but we *are* to understand that he was never in the world "without measure" before this time. He has been in the world from the moment the promise was given, "that the seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head." But since Christ's ascension, he is in the world in a way that he was never before. Christ said: "I tell you the 'truth;' it is expedient for you that I go away." Now, the truth of this assertion is plainly

manifest in the *results* that followed his departure as compared with those that preceded his ascension. These results we will now contrast.

At the expiration of the first two thousand years of the world's history, God looked down from heaven upon the children of men. What was the result? He saw but one living witness to the truth; there was only one believer in the world and that was Noah. The Holy Spirit, the regenerating person of the God-head, had been in the world from the beginning, but "with measure." Doubtless He had regenerated many souls, but they had died and gone to glory. Still, after twenty centuries had rolled away, there was only one believer on the earth. Is it not clear that the world could not be brought to a knowledge of the truth under that rêgime? Noah and his house escaped the destruction of the flood. Again men multiplied upon the earth, and the Holy Spirit continued to work. Two thousand years more rolled by and again God looked from heaven upon the world. What was the result? He saw only about five hundred living witnesses to the truth. No doubt but that the Holy Spirit had regenerated many souls during these two thousand years, but they had "finished their course with joy" and were glorified in heaven. There were, however, only about five hundred left to witness for Christ.

Four thousand years of the world's history written; the Holy Spirit working all the while, but "with measure," and how meager the results. Then Christ came. He was born of Jewish parents; circumcised the eighth day according to Jewish law; was inducted into the Priesthood legally at the legal age of thirty years; then preached for three years. He gave a commission to His disciples. "Go," "but to none save the lost sheep of Israel, and as you go preach." Here the Holy Spirit is circumscribed again. There were no extensive revivals under Christ's ministry. He preached the truth with power, and not "with words of man's wisdom;" some believed on Him, but He did not make them believe; it was the Holy Spirit that wrought faith in them. Christ said, "Son, daughter, thy sins be forgiven thee," but it was because the Holy Spirit had regenerated them. Christ finished His ministry, ascended Calvary, died and was buried, and arose the third day. Strange to say, yet true, there were not exceeding one thousand witnesses to the truth then living on the earth. Does it not seem impossible for the world to be brought to the knowledge of the truth under that rêgime?

Four thousand years have passed away; world-wide destruction by the flood as a warning, as a testimony that God will by no means spare the guilty; the beautiful life of Christ for thirty years, and His wonderful teachings for three years more; the

Holy Spirit in the world and working all the while, and yet not more than one thousand witnesses to the truth, among the entire mass of mankind, when Christ arose from the tomb. Are the results what we might have reasonably expected? Does it not look like a hopeless undertaking to subdue the world by grace and grace only? Christ, after His resurrection and before His ascension, gave a commission. Was it a new commission? No. It was an extension of the old. "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost," "lo! I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world."

The church passed from Judaism to Christianity at the resurrection of Christ. Before that event, it was Judaism; the moment he arose, it was Christianity; under the extended or enlarged commission, the Holy Spirit is no longer circumscribed.

Ere Christ ascended to heaven, he promised to send the Holy Spirit, and He commanded the disciples to stay in Jerusalem and pray for the redemption of the promise. They did as commanded; and on the day of Pentecost, while Peter preached and Christians prayed, the promise was redeemed, and the Holy Spirit was poured out without measure, and being no longer confined to a single people, that is to say, to "the lost sheep of the house of Israel," His blessed unction fell upon Parthians,

Medes, Elamites and on the dwellers of Mesopotamia, India, Cappadocia, Pontus, Asia, Phrygia, Pamphylia, Egypt and in the parts of Libya about Cyrene, and strangers of Rome, Jews and proselytes, Cretes and Arabians, and three thousand were added to the church in one day. What a grand revival! It was a sublime awakening. The world—the world never witnessed anything like it before.

Methuselah, old as he was, never looked upon such a scene. The church marched down through twenty centuries, from Adam to Noah, unorganized, it is true, but none the less the church of God, and her heart was never thrilled with such a scene. Then on she went, through Patriarchal piety, ritualistic splendor and prophetic glory, for twenty centuries more; still no such revival relieved her sorrows, lightened her burdens, or filled her cup of joy.

The Son of God came in human form; lived the life of the good and pure; preached the gospel with divine power; healed the sick; cast out devils; gave sight to the blind; hearing to the deaf; and raised the dead. Still the church was not greatly revived. But when he ascended to heaven and sent the Comforter "without measure" to accompany the gospel truths that Peter uttered, the results were so astounding that the world trembled; the church was thrilled with delight; and nationalities, unused to psalms, joined in the anthems of sublimest praise

unto "Him who washed them in His own most precious blood."

Did not Christ tell the truth when He said, "It is expedient for you," for the church and for the world, "that I go away?" When Christ ascended to heaven, the church, for the most part, was confined to little Palestine; aye! was locked within the walls of Jerusalem. But since His ascension, and having sent the Holy Spirit "without measure," she has, in less than eighteen centuries, encompassed Judea; has permeated the Germanic States; crossed the Rubicon and rolled all over Gaul; and under the tuition of the same Holy Spirit, she has lifted herself upon divine wings, and by sanctified breezes has been borne across three thousand miles of ocean and blest all North America; is now permeating South America; the Sandwich Islands, Madagascar are Christianized; India and China are feeling the breathings of this mighty, conquering Comforter; and to-day there is not a locked door of any people under heaven against this blessed Bible. But, on the contrary, each nationality has thrown its doors wide open and invited this blessed Bible in.

With all these glorious results shining full in our face, no more logic is required to convince any intelligent man that it was, indeed, a truth, a grand truth, that Christ enunciated when he said "If I go not away the Comforter will not come unto you, but if I depart I will send Him unto you, and when

He is come He will *reprove* the world of sin and of righteousness and of judgment." His regenerating and sanctifying work is being recognized everywhere. And even now, blessed be God, the anthems of salvation ring through every land, and are answered by every isle and ocean, and the millions, redeemed by Jesus and regenerated by the Holy Comforter, 'neath every sky, unite their voices in the sublimer strains, "worthy is the Lamb to receive riches, and wisdom, and power, and dominion, and glory forever." And along the highways and byways the ransomed throng, ever increasing as years roll by, hymn the grandest "*Te Deums*," that ever breathed from human tongues, or echoed 'neath the golden dome of heaven's courts, and, by the glorified, returned to earth to be answered back in a still sublimer refrain, "unto Him that loved us, and washed us in His own blood, be praise, and honor, and glory, now and forever given." Praise God for His goodness. Bless Him, all ye people, for the precious gift of the Holy Comforter. Ye, who sit in the region of the shadow of death, list to the wooing voice of the Holy Spirit, who only can cause the scales to fall from off your eyes and reveal the beauty and glory of the eternal redemption.

It has not been two thousand years since Jesus ascended and the sending of the blessed Comforter, yet what are the results? Do we find only one be-

liever in the world to-day, as was found at the expiration of the first two thousand years of the world's history? Or only "five hundred," as at the close of four thousand years? Or only "one thousand," as when Christ ascended and sent the Comforter, the only regenerating person of the God-Head? Nay, verily! We see continents, islands and seas basking in the sunshine of a Saviour's face; we hear the voices of "ten thousand times ten thousand and thousands of thousands" from under every sky, sweeping across crested billows and far-stretching mainlands, joining in the choruses of the glorified throng, in ascriptions of praise, and power, and dominion, and glory to Him "Who was, and is and ever will be God over all and blessed forever."

The Holy Spirit's work is a necessity to our enjoyment of Christ's "so great salvation." He is in the world; He is by our side, is ready, waiting and anxious to take of the things of Jesus and show them unto us. May He "work within us to will and to do of God's good pleasure." May He "enlighten our understandings in the knowledge of the truth," and "witness with our spirits that we are the children of God," and open our eyes that we may behold wondrous things out of God's law," and "so teach us to number our days that we shall apply our hearts unto wisdom." The anthem that inspiration sings to the Lord Jehovah is applicable also to the Holy Spirit.

"Praise God in the sanctuary;
Praise him in the firmament of his power;
Praise him for his mighty acts;
Praise him according to his excellent greatness;
Praise him with the sound of the trumpet;
Praise him with the psaltery and harp;
Praise him with the timbrel and the dance;
Praise him with stringed instruments and organs;
Praise him upon the loud cymbals;
Praise him upon the high-sounding cymbals;
Let everything that hath breath praise the Lord.
PRAISE YE THE LORD."

I.

"Holy Spirit, faithful guide,
Ever near the Christian's side;
Gently lead us by the hand,
Pilgrims in a desert land;
Weary souls for e'er rejoice,
While they hear that sweetest voice,
Whispering softly, wanderer, come!
Follow me, I'll guide thee home.

II.

"Ever present, truest friend,
Ever near, thine aid to lend,
Leave us not to doubt and fear,
Groping on in darkness drear,
When the storms are raging sore,
Hearts grow faint and hopes give o'er,
Whispering softly, wanderer, come!
Follow me, I'll guide thee home.

III.

"When our days of toil shall cease,
Waiting still for sweet release,
Nothing left but heaven and prayer,
Wondering if our names were there;
Wading deep the dismal flood,
Pleading naught but Jesus' blood;
Whispering softly, wanderer, come!
Follow me, I'll guide thee home."

CHAPTER IV.

UNBELIEF.

Christ having ascended "unto his Father and our Father, received gifts for men," and the greatest of all these gifts is the Holy Spirit. He is to "abide" with us, so that we may be continually in the light. When the sun sinks beneath the western hills, we are in darkness. Should the Holy Spirit withdraw his presence but for an hour, we would be in spiritual night. He not only creates the spiritual eye, which alone is adapted to see spiritual truth, but He is the "sun" or "light" of that eye that reveals the truth to it. In other words, He is the "candle of the Lord" that shines upon the truth. It is "*His work*" to make us appreciate the work of Jesus for us; to see the omnipotence of grace; to understand how "God can be just and justify the ungodly;" to see the beauties of redemption; to comprehend the plain, simple plan of salvation; in short, to make us both able and willing to "cast our burdens on the Lord," and confide all our interests for time and eternity to His keeping.

In order, however, to do all this, there must be a beginning point to His work. For it would be folly to adorn grace and present it to a blind eye. He must first create the spiritual eye adapted to such scenes. It would be folly to play the harp of re-

demption to a deaf ear. He must first create the spiritual ear, which alone is adapted to such harmony of sounds. It would be folly to use heavenly logic to convince a man of the truth and compass of the atonement if he is without a spiritual understanding. He must first create the understanding adapted to comprehend such logic. "Order" is "heaven's law," and the Holy Spirit recognizes this law in all his working.

It is also evident that Christ would not have ascended to heaven in order to send the Holy Spirit to do *a* work that man could do for himself. His, then, is the work of God—a work which none but God can do. Christ would never have obeyed the law for sinners if sinners could themselves have obeyed. Christ did nothing for sinners that they could do for themselves. Neither does the Holy Spirit do anything for us that we can do for ourselves. If sinners could have obeyed the law, there had been no necessity for Christ to obey it; and if sinners of themselves could appreciate and accept the results of his obedience, the Holy Spirit would not have been a necessity. It is, therefore, as much a divine work to apply the atonement as it was to make it. Without the atonement, made by Christ, we are all lost; without the Holy Spirit to make us appreciate and accept it, none of us could be saved. If Christ's work was necessary in order to our salvation, the work of the Comforter is equally necessa-

ry to the same end. The order of the Holy Spirit's work, as stated by Christ himself, is this, "When He is come, He will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment; of sin, because they believe not on me." It is the sin of unbelief that the Holy Spirit must first make us to understand. Now, if it were possible that we of ourselves could see this sin and understand its heinousness, there would be no necessity for the Holy Spirit to show it to us. But we cannot see it; we cannot appreciate it; we cannot of ourselves understand it. It is damning in its nature, but we don't believe this. It is the quintessence of all the vileness, pollution and infamy of earth and hell, but we don't so understand it. It can and does insinuate itself into every part of the vast universe of God, save into the heart of Deity, and into the bosoms of glorified believers, but we esteem this impossible. It is akin to divine omnipotence in its power, yet we naturally think that we can master it easily ourselves.

And if the Holy Spirit does not show us its vileness, its pollution, its insinuating properties and its destructive nature, and show it to us in this life, we will never see it, yet it will destroy us, and even a burning eternity will be incompetent to make us understand its nature. None but the Holy Spirit can show it unto us, and he will not go into the burning pit to do it; we must see it in this life or never.

Unbelief is not the "result" of transgression; it is the cause of transgression, and more than this, it is the cause of all the overt acts of transgression of the sinner. It is not the "effect" of angels' or Adam's sin, but the "cause" of both.

The Bible informs us how sin came into the world, but it does not inform us of the origin of unbelief, or how it came into existence. Where it came from and how it sprang into existence is a mystery, and such a mystery that all speculation concerning it is futile. Purity is no bar to its approach, and holiness itself has been polluted by it. No being in the universe is secure from its pollution, guilt and destructive power, save God and the glorified.

If unbelief is all this, and opposed to everything good besides, we see the impossibility of the sinner of himself ever accepting the atonement made by Jesus. It being the *cause* and not the *effect* of transgression, we see why it cannot be forgiven, and yet transgression can be pardoned. Thieves, liars and murderers can by grace repent of their sins, turn away from them and be forgiven and crowned in heaven. But no unbeliever can be crowned there. Unbelief, and unbelief only, bars the door of heaven against the soul. Hence it is that the Bible does not say that the thief shall be lost. If it did, how could Christ have said to the thief on the cross, "This day shalt thou be with me in Paradise?" The

Bible does not say that the murderer shall be lost. If murderers cannot be forgiven and saved on condition of repentance, where is David, the man after God's own heart? Not because he was a murderer that he obtained favor with God, but because he "turned from his sin with full purpose of and endeavor after new obedience." I have no doubt that thousands of murderers have repented of their sins and turned from them, and now are crowned on the throne of God in heaven. What does the Bible mean when it says, "Christ can save unto the uttermost all who will come unto God by him," if murderers, thieves and false swearers cannot be saved? The Bible does not say that even a blasphemer shall be damned. If blasphemers cannot be forgiven and glorified, what has become of the Apostle Paul, who, to all intents and purposes, was both a murderer and blasphemer? But the Bible does say, "He that *believeth not* shall be damned." There must be something, then, more heinous in unbelief than in any overt act of trangression that the sinner can commit himself. The sinner's power is manifest in the overt acts he commits. He can commit these or not, as he chooses. The power of unbelief is manifest in making him choose to commit such acts. It is the hand of the sinner that uses the weapon that slays his fellow-man. It is unbelief that makes him reach out the hand, grasp the weapon and strike the fatal blow. But for unbelief his hand would hang

by his side, the weapon would not be seized and his fellow-man would not be injured. In other words, the sinner is the gun, the ammunition is what he uses, unbelief is the spark and murder is the consequence. Without the spark there is no explosion, and consequently no crime is committed. Hence, take away unbelief and overt acts of transgression cease to exist; until unbelief entered heaven, peace sat enthroned on every countenance and played in every smile; when it entered, peace departed and rebellion followed, and divine Omnipotence was called into exercise and the rebels were cast down into the fiery vault.

Unbelief first takes possession of the thoughts; after this, the conquest of the man is easy; therefore the Scriptures warn so frequently and earnestly against evil thoughts. "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his *thoughts*, and let him turn unto the Lord and he will have mercy upon him, and unto our God, for he will abundantly pardon." "Think no evil." "As he thinketh in his heart, so is he." Purity is no safe-guard whatever against the approaches of unbelief. It will attack the thoughts of pure, spotless and holy angels as quickly and certainly as it does those of the vilest sinner, and with the same dire results. Fallen angels, we are told, are the victims of its falsehood and power.

It is now very apparent that the sin of unbelief

is one thing ; the overt act of the sinner is another thing altogether. While the overt act can be pardoned and the sinner forgiven, unbelief can neither be pardoned nor forgiven. Hence, a murderer can be forgiven and crowned in glory, but an unbeliever never.

The first work of the Holy Spirit is to reprove the world of the sin of unbelief. As it is the "cause" and not the "effect" of transgression, it is beyond our natural ability to appreciate its degrading and destructive power. In order that the Holy Spirit shall perform his work effectually, he must work on a plan which infinite wisdom devised, and this plan as revealed is "to take of the things of Jesus and show them unto us," which particular things were covered up by the veil of the sensuous, and consequently did not and could not appeal to the spiritual understanding, but to the natural, while Christ was visibly present. Says Christ: "If I depart I will send him, and when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, because they believe not on me." The sin of unbelief is the only sin he reproves the world of. We do not need the Holy Spirit to teach us that murder, theft, falsehood, profanity, blasphemy and "such like" are sins ; the law teaches all this, and our consciousness testifies to the fact. "I had not known sin except the law had said, thou shalt not covet." In other words, I had never known that covetousness was a sin if the law had not told me so.

Being sinners, we can understand and appreciate the sin in overt acts of trangression, because these are our acts. We can easily understand, if the Bible is true, if we are guilty of murder, that unless we repent of this sin, God would be just in consigning us to everlasting punishment for it, but we cannot see any justice in being consigned to everlasting punishment for simply not believing in Christ as He is revealed in the gospel. In other words, if we are free from all overt acts of transgression, are perfectly moral, and pronounced by the laws of the State and society to be blameless, we can neither see, feel nor appreciate that God can be just in banishing us the presence and glories of heaven for no other sin than that we do not believe in Christ; yet this is the only sin that ever damned a soul or ever will.

If we were as free from overt acts of transgression as the angel Gabriel, and as pure and spotless in character as the angel Michael, and yet did not believe in Jesus, we would merit the doom of Lucifer, and we would receive it. It will forever remain true, "he that believeth not shall be damned," for the Lord God hath spoken it. It is not what we do or fail to do that unites us to Christ. Faith only is the bond of union. "He that believeth is not condemned, but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God."

Unbelief is akin to Omnipotence and can insinuate itself, as already said, into any part of the universe of God, save into the bosoms of the glorified and into the heart of Deity. It actually did insinuate itself into heaven; it laid hold on spotless angels. Angels were not sinners; they were not thieves, liars, drunkards, gamblers or murderers. They had never been guilty of any crime, such as sinners are guilty of, and which the natural understanding of man is obliged to acknowledge must be repented of, or God would be just in consigning them to outer darkness.

Still, the once pure angels became unbelievers. How do we know that they became unbelievers? From the simple fact they "rebelled against God," and were cast out of heaven down to hell, and are reserved under chains of darkness. Rebellion against all authority, human or divine, is but the legitimate fruit of unbelief, the sure manifestation of its presence, like the green leaves on the tree are evidences of the fact that the tree is alive, not dead. What cast angels out of heaven? Was it rebellion? O no! It was unbelief, the sin that caused them to rebel.

If the pure and holy angels were in danger of becoming unbelievers and of rebelling against God, and of losing their position in heaven, and of being cast down to hell, I ask, is there not danger that you and I will miss the mark of the prize of our

high calling (for all are called) and of being shut up in everlasting burnings, because of the same unbelief, since we were born unbelievers? We do not have to become unbelievers like the fallen angels did in order to be lost. "We were conceived in sin and brought forth in iniquity."

Angels were each a separate creation; there could be no such thing as federal-headship among them; consequently, when they sinned they could not be redeemed. Hence each and every angel that became an unbeliever, God cast down to hell. Still it remains true that we cannot see, feel or appreciate the fact that there is any danger, harm or power in unbelief. Nor can we ever philosophize ourselves into the conclusion that there is any sin in it. The angels themselves, while sinless and in the presence of God in heaven, could not see any harm, danger or damnation in it. So no power in the universe can ever make us see any danger or sin in it but the Holy Spirit. Then, O man, beware! "Quench not the Spirit."

We have said that unbelief is akin to omnipotence, and the results of its working will certainly justify the assertion. It had the power and actually did seize upon the fairest, most intelligent and greatest of all the angels in heaven, the leader of the "shining hosts," and transformed him into a devil. There can be no doubt but that the devil was once an angel in heaven, for the Bible says so. Unbelief is want-

ing in creative power, but it certainly has the ability to transform the brightest of God's creation into the blackest, the best into the worst, the purest into the most polluted, and cause a dismal hell to be added to the universe of God.

If unbelief had the power to go into heaven and mingle, though unperceived, with the shining throng (and not the least evidence of its power is to conceal the hideousness of its mien) and lay hold of the brightest, most intelligent and the leader of the hosts and make a devil of him, what can it not do with you and me who were born sinners, with our surroundings sinful, our natural inclinations to sin, and our dispositions to despise holiness, complete, and unbelievers from our birth? The angel that fell the lowest, because he was the highest, could see no danger in unbelief; he could not imagine that it was possible for it to change his position in heaven, much less cast him down to hell and make a devil of him, but such is the fact nevertheless. Why do not all men believe in Jesus? Unbelief won't let them, while at the same time it makes them feel that they are not dishonoring God and ruining their own souls by not believing in Him, but such is the fact. The only danger that any sinner needs apprehend is from unbelief. But for it heaven had never been bereaved of a large number of its shining family; the devil had never existed; hell had no

place in God's universe, and death itself had never been known. O the power of unbelief!

God created Adam in his own image. He planted a garden eastward in Eden, and there placed the first human pair. Adam knew God as his creator, and the creator of all things and the upholder of all things. There must be an "eternal fitness in things" in God's universe. Adam was precisely adapted to Eden, and Eden especially adapted to Adam. God talked with him face to face and constituted him the Federal Head of all his posterity, thus devolving tremendous responsibilities upon him, which, if anything could, would have opened his eyes to the danger of heeding any other voice than his Creator's, and especially when that voice contradicted flatly the positive command of God. Adam had no idea of disobeying God. He had no desire to do such a thing. But unbelief whispered in his ear another thought and bred another desire.

God created him under law, and doubtless impressed him with the grave responsibility resting upon him of being the saviour of all his posterity by perfect obedience to the law. Can you imagine a more powerful incentive to obedience? Or, if he failed, he would entail sin, misery, death and hell upon all his seed as well as damn himself. Can you imagine a more powerful warning to keep from disobedience? Yet what a failure of both!

Adam is the only person God ever put on trial in

this world, and He hedged him in with the most blessed opportunities, promises and assurances possible, in case he stood the test, and the most terrible curses and miseries if he failed. We are not on trial. "He that believeth is not condemned ; he that believeth not is condemned already." Our trial is past; we were condemned in Adam. "In him we sinned and fell in his first transgression." In the garden of Eden God planted two particular trees. One he named the "tree of knowledge of good and evil;" the other, the "tree of life." Then pointing to the tree of knowledge: He said, "Adam, of all the trees of the garden thou mayest freely eat; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil thou shalt not eat of it; for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." The devil, in serpent form, said to Adam, "No, you won't die; this is all a mistake; but 'I' tell you the truth: the day you eat of this tree of 'knowledge,' you will be like God, having knowledge of good and evil." Now, which did Adam believe, God or Satan ? He believed Satan. Did that not make God a liar ? Certainly. And this is just what unbelief is doing every moment. Was Adam under any obligation to believe what Satan said ? Did Satan create him? Did he plant the garden ? Did he give him his pleasing surroundings ? Was Satan preserving his life ? No; Adam was under no obligation whatever to listen to him, or believe a word he said. But, on

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the contrary, he was under obligation to believe God, for he had the clearest evidence of his goodness, wisdom and power that could possibly be given; yet, notwithstanding all this, he believed Satan. How do we know that he believed Satan? Because he stretched forth his hand, took the fruit that God positively forbade him eating. He was cast out of Eden, cursed himself, plunged his entire posterity into the cess pool of sin and misery, and brought a curse upon the ground, so that even now it refuses to yield its full increase. What was it that cast Adam out of Eden? Unbelief. What was it that brought sin, misery, death and all the ills to which flesh is heir into the world? Unbelief. The taking of the fruit was but the manifestation of the fact that Adam had become an unbeliever. Had he believed God he never could have transgressed. When he believed Satan he could but transgress.

Here, now, are two sins. Unbelief is one; transgression, the other. Transgression is man's sin, because it is man's act, and can, therefore, be forgiven on the ground of repentance. Unbelief is the sin that the devil offered man and he accepted it, which cannot be pardoned, which cannot be forgiven, which its opposite, Faith, must destroy ere he who has it can be crowned in glory. Hence the truth so clearly taught, "that the souls of believers are made perfect at death." The believer's sins are forgiven the moment he believes; (i. e.) the transgres-

sions he committs are forgiven. But unbelief is in him still, for "*faith*" does not destroy it, except by slow degrees, any more than the leaven leavens the meal. The fight is between "faith" and "unbelief," and it is kept up until death, when faith has achieved a perfect and complete victory. Unbelief is demolished—dead. Then "faith" has accomplished its perfect work, and the child of Jesus, no longer annoyed by this fell destroyer, but entirely freed from both its power and influence, is ready to go to heaven, his home, and he immediately reaches for his crown and God puts it on his brow. Thus unbelief is not pardoned, like overt acts of transgression are, or sins of omission, but demolished, destroyed, killed, and "faith" only is the power that kills it.

It is a very common and a very serious mistake, made by many, to suppose that when faith is given, or implanted in the bosom, that unbelief is ousted or destroyed that moment. The man is just as great an unbeliever the moment he exercises faith as he ever was. There is just as much unleavened meal in the lump the moment the leaven is put into it as there ever was. Though unbelief is akin to omnipotence, faith is altogether omnipotent ; therefore, the believing sinner's salvation is secured the moment he believes. (This will be fully explained in its proper place.)

Now, if Adam, who was made pure and spotless, was in danger of being cursed himself, and of plung-

ing all his posterity into sin, death and hell by becoming an unbeliever, I want to know if you and I are not in danger from the same cause, since we were born unbelievers? If unbelief was sufficiently potent to make Adam, the sinless, transgress, and fill him and the world with sin, disease and death; could cause his banishment from the Eden of his love and the presence of his God, how can we expect to fight the same monster alone and achieve a glorious victory?

Adam could see no harm, danger or sin in unbelief, even while pure and holy. Is it unreasonable that we should fail to see the same things in it, since we have become vile and polluted? If the "pure" could see no danger or damnationin "unbelief," should it be matter of astonishment that the "impure" should fail to see and appreciate the same things? Yet it drove Adam from Eden, a ruined and undone sinner, and if we continue in "unbelief," it will drive us into a burning hell, to suffer the companionship of the devil and all whom he has deceived and ruined. We need apprehend the wrath and curse of God from no other cause. Unbelief is the terrible and soul-destroying sin. And all the philosophy and learning of the world are impotent to make us see, much less appreciate, its nature and destroying power. None but God, in the person of His Holy Spirit, can ever show it to us, and as it does not depart when we first see it, but abides to curse us still,

is the cause why the Holy Spirit must take up his abode in our bodies as his temples, so as constantly to guard us from its evil designs and destructive blows.

The antediluvians were unbelievers, and universally so—in so much that there were no constraining influences to check them in their vileness, therefore, their wickedness became so vile and unblushing that God determined upon their destruction by a flood. Noah was the only believer on the earth—the only witness to the truth. You perceive that unbelief held almost universal sway, and it caused every conceivable sort of transgression. But for their unbelief, they had not committed a single sin, yet the fountains of the great deep were broken up, and the windows of heaven were opened, and the world was brought to ruin ; only Noah and his family were saved. What was it that broke up the fountains of the great deep and opened the windows of heaven ? Unbelief (or want of rightousness, which is the same). What was it that caused the deluge to destroy all flesh ? Unbelief. What saved Noah ? "Faith." "He that believeth shall be saved." Now, if unbelief was sufficiently potent as to cause the destruction of the whole world in an hour, how can we hope to contend successfully against it single-handed ? Yet it makes the sinner think he can. If the whole world could not resist its power, but was cursed to death by it, it does seem strange that a solitary man

should think for a moment that he has the power to drive back this Goliath of perdition and himself escape unharmed. There is danger that all sinners, even those who boast of their ability to turn unto God at any time, will be ruined forever. Christ says, "No man *can* come unto me, except the Father, who hath sent me, draw him." Still they believe that this is also a mistake.

The wickedness of Sodom cried to heaven for vengeance, and God revealed his purpose to destroy it with fire and brimstone, together with the other cities of the plain. Lot was the only believer in the city. As to the vile transgressions of the Sodomites, there can be no question. Their wickedness was great and merited the curse. But for their unbelief, however, they had not been transgressors at all. Fire and brimstone fell from heaven and consumed them. What brought the fire and brimstone upon these cities? Unbelief. If unbelief had the power to destroy the cities of the plain, has it not the power to destroy individual sinners? Yet no sinner can appreciate the destructive power of this sin unless the Holy Spirit reveals it to him. Christ says so, therefore, He returned to heaven in order to send Him.

This subject is so important that the Bible is filled with illustrations of it, so that no one shall be duped into perdition. I shall, therefore, not ask pardon for citing one or two more illustrations setting forth the damning power of this monster, unbelief.

What caused such vast multitudes of God's chosen people to fall by the way while on their journey from Egypt to Canaan? Unbelief. Still, not one of them could see of themselves any sin or danger in it. Nevertheless their bones bleached in the wilderness.

Why were the natural branches of the olive tree (the Jews) broken off, and those of the wild olive (the Gentiles) graffed in? "Well, because of unbelief. They were broken off, and thou standest by faith. Be not high-minded, but fear; for if God spared not the natural branches, take heed also, lest he spare not thee. Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God; on them which fell, severity; but toward thee goodness; otherwise, thou also shalt be cut off. And they also, if they abide not still in '*unbelief*,' shall be grafted in; for God is able to graff them in again."

There is no necessity for adding other illustrations to prove or convince of the terrible nature, degrading tendency and destructive power of unbelief. Let the above suffice. If they prove anything, they certainly prove that man is not a match for this sin; that he is perfectly helpless to resist its approaches or escape its power; that neither he nor angels can see any harm in it; nor by philosophizing, can bring himself to the conclusion that if not guilty of some great crime of his own committing, God cannot be just in consigning him to the pains of hell

forever for simply not believing in Jesus. Notwithstanding, Jesus positively assures him, "if ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins."

If unbelief is capable of insinuating itself into heaven; of entering the bosoms of pure and holy angels and dragging them down to flames; of going into the garden of Eden and polluting our first father, made in God's own image, and through him cursing all his posterity, and also the very ground; of destroying a world with a flood of waters; of burning up the cities of the plain with fire and brimstone; of causing God to "swear in his wrath" that his own chosen, peculiar people "should not enter into his rest" because of unbelief; of cutting off the natural branches, and assuring them at the same time that if they continue not in unbelief, he will graff them back into their own Olive Tree. I ask, if unbelief is capable of doing all this, is it wise for an immortal soul to treat it lightly, take it into confidence, and counsel with it on spiritual subjects? Is it wise to quench the Spirit when he comes to interpose his omniscience and omnipotence on your behalf, and can cause you to see and appreciate its heinousness, vileness and destructive power, and alone can make you desire to be freed from its dominion and grasp? Remember, that no other power in the universe can "reprove the world of sin, because they believe not on Christ," and because of this fact it becomes necessary for Christ,

after he finished the work the Father gave him to do, which was to make a complete atonement, to go back to heaven and send the Holy Spirit, that his (Christ's) work might not be in vain, and that sinners should be blest to all eternity by it.

Our blessed Lord having ascended, and having received this greatest of all gifts (save Christ himself), the Holy Spirit, and having sent Him into the world "without measure," the question naturally arises, in what way can He show us unbelief, so as to make us appreciate it and dread it, that Christ himself could not reveal it unto the world? What plan does he work on? The answer is, "He takes of the things of Christ and showeth them unto us." All the divine in Christ was covered up by the veil of the sensuous. He could not reveal omnipotence, except to the natural eye, from the fact that the natural eye saw his person. And so with all the "*things*" of Christ. When Jesus raised Lazarus from the grave, very few believed on him, and those few were made to believe by the Holy Spirit, not by himself, simply because all present saw his natural person; each ear heard his natural voice and every eye saw Lazarus come out of the grave. Though so few believed on him because of the miracle when he wrought it, yet I have no doubt but the grand lessons taught by this miracle, under the tuition of the Holy Spirit, have been instrumental in the salvation of thousands of souls

since. The Holy Spirit takes the "things" of Christ in this miracle, divests them of the sensuous, and shows them to us.

He does it in this way. He first throws a faint, glimmering ray of spiritual light on unbelief. The sinner sees something of its heinousness and trembles. He is convicted of this sin, and this causes him to desire an almighty saviour. Then the Holy Spirit says, come with me to the grave of Lazarus. He says, do you see that man, called Christ, standing by the grave? Yes, but not with the natural eye. I see him in the record. Do you hear him say, Lazarus, come forth? Yes, but not with my natural ear; I hear him in the record. Do you see Lazarus obeying the command, come forth, and rising into life? Yes, but not with the natural eye; I see from the record that he arose. Then, must not Christ be more than man; must he not be very God if he can raise the dead? For who ever heard of a mere man raising the dead? Certainly, I see it now; I understand it all, and he is the very Saviour I want, and I will take him for my Saviour. I want a Saviour who can raise the dead. If he can do this, I am sure he can save me. But the convicted sinner wants something more than an Almighty Saviour. He wants a sympathizing Saviour. Says the Holy Spirit, do you see that tear on the cheek of Jesus? Yes. Would he have wept if he had not deeply sympathized with Martha and Mary in their sorrow

and bereavement? Certainly not. He is the very Saviour I want. A Saviour that can sympathize with me in all my distresses, trials, temptations and sorrows.

But the convicted sinner wants something more than an almighty and sympathetic Saviour. He wants a "good" Saviour. The Holy Spirit asks him, was it not an act of kindness, a good deed, to raise Lazarus and give him back to his sisters? Yes, it is the best of deeds, and he is the Saviour I want. The Holy Spirit says, take him, trust him, and he will do all for you spiritually that he did for Martha, Mary and Lazarus naturally. It is now clear how the Holy Spirit takes of the "things of Jesus" and showeth them unto us. He takes the divine "Almightiness," divine "sympathy" and divine "goodness," divested of all the sensuous, so that the convicted, anxious sinner can both see and appreciate them, in the clear light He (the Spirit) flashes upon them. Christ tells us "that when He (the Comforter) is come, he will not speak of himself, but whatsoever he shall hear," in the Bible—providence or elsewhere—of Christ. "That shall he speak, and he will show you things to come." "He will glorify me, for he shall receive of mine and show it unto you."

Thanksgivings and praises, all along the line of Christ's Kingdom, now thrill the church of God's elect, because of the superior brightness of our

spiritual sky over the shadows of the dispensation of law. The church is now under the dispensation of the blessed Spirit—a despensation from under which she can never, and ought never, to be removed, as the spread of the gospel in the last eighteen centuries testifies. Upon some special hearts, as Abraham's, David's, Isaiah's and others, under the legal economy, the Holy Spirit poured a flood of light, which gave to these Old Testament worthies a conception of glory, denied to their brethren, and which made them famous all over the world in their own day, and as centuries roll by make them more famous still. Had David seen the truth less clearly, his harp-strings had breathed sadder strains, and, the "grave, sweet melody" had cheered fewer hearts. Darkness and Light in the moral world are analgous to the same in the natural. Beauty, to fascinate, must be seen in both.

Why does not the beauty of the landscape enchant you at midnight as it does at noon? Is it not as beautiful then as at noon-day? Yes, but it can't thrill you, simply becaue the darkness veils it from the eye. What is necessary in order for it to thrill you again as it has done before? The darkness must disappear. As the sun reaches the eastern horizon, backward rolls the curtain of darkness, still not enough of the landscape is visible to thrill your being. As the sun rises higher, backward rolls the darkness. Now the mountain peaks and

rocky cliffs rise to view, but still not enough is visible to arouse admiration to the loftiest pitch. As the sun approaches its zenith, all darkness disappears, and wherever you look, the landscape charms, and your whole being is rapt in wonder and admiration.

What is necessary in order that the beauty and glory of the redemption of Jesus shall enthuse our being? The rising of the Holy Spirit, with "healing in his beams," driving back the curtain of unbelief. It is this that shuts out all the beauty of redemption from our appreciation. We first catch only a glimpse, and as other spiritual rays of light fall upon us, backward rolls the curtain of unbelief, and the scene becomes at first pleasing, and as more of it is seen, then we are charmed, and as the veil is driven backward farther, then we are fascinated and wonder why redemption did not always fascinate us with its beauty; it is so simple, yet so sublime, and the plan of salvation is now understood as we never understood it before, and the means of grace are appreciated as never before; what was once all darkness is now all light, and the things once despised now charm the most. The reason why redemption does not thrill every soul is because it is not seen. Unbelief curtains all the beauty, love and glory of God by being over the heart, and it shuts out all spiritual light, and because not seen, the religion of the gospel, with all its sublime purposes, methods

and powers are unappreciated. "If thou hadst known the things that make for thy peace, but now they are 'hid' from thine eyes."

Then open the door and let the light of glory into your soul; it will purify your corruption, illumine your darkness and make plain the paths of wisdom and righteousness; it will justify you, sanctify you, and in eternity glorify you.

The path of duty is the path of safety, and faith calls you to walk therein. "Believe and thou shalt *be* saved."

"Blind unbelief is sure to err,
And scan his work in vain;
God is his own interpreter,
And he will make it plain."

CHAPTER V.

THE BELIEVING SINNER'S WORK.

Our blessed Redeemer made a full and complete atonement; the Holy Spirit's work is to apply it, and the believing sinner's is to "work out his salvation.". The three works of the three parties are separate and distinct. Neither party, in the purpose of God, attempts to do the work of the other. "Redemption" is the exclusive work of Christ; its application to the sinner is the exclusive work of

the Holy Spirit; then the sinner is to "work out his salvation" (not his regeneration) by the aid of "grace." Christ's promise is, "my grace shall be sufficient for you." The sinner did not assist Christ to accomplish his work, nor the Holy Spirit to accomplish his; yet, both Christ and the Holy Spirit are present and manifest in the "sinners work." Still, notwithstanding, Christ and the Holy Spirit have done so much for sinners, even everything that they could not do for themselves, it remains true that each child of God has a great work to do. The Bible says so. It commands, "work out your salvation;" "go work to-day in my vineyard." "Whatsoever thy hands find to do, do it with all thy might."

This particular work, however, is not to make a redemption, but because redeemed; not to effect regeneration, but because regenerated. It is the child of Jesus who is commanded to work. It is in this way only that he can let his light shine (let Christ in him shine), manifest to others the redemption of Christ, which is his by faith. Hence "others, seeing his good works," shall thereby be brought to the knowledge of the truth also. Activity should characterize each Christian. The head, the hand, the heart, the pocket and the foot should all be moving, and moving in the light and pathway mapped out by the blessed Bible. It alone "is the lamp unto our feet and the light to our path."

I shall now endeavor to illustrate how the Christian "works out his salvation," because by this method we may possibly be able to put the subject in a clearer light than by any other, and at the same time show where, when, and what the nature of the work is, that he is commanded to do. Bible facts may ofttimes be used to illustrate truths and principles they were not designed to impress; (e. g.) the parable of the leaven, which shows how grace works in its own resistless way and will eventually permeate the entire mass of mankind till all peoples and kindreds and tongues shall acknowledge the right of Christ to reign, at the same time furnishes a most beautiful illustration of development of grace within the individual.

The rebuilding of the walls of Jerusalem by Nehemiah I shall use to illustrate (and nothing more) how the child of Jesus "works out his salvation." This illustration will show "where" each soul should begin the work, "where" he should work, with "what material" he must work, and how the work "ought to be executed."

Nehemiah was a captive and in a strange land. By nature, we are all in captivity to sin, and carried by it into a strange land far from God. Nehemiah made inquiry of Hanani and certain men of Judah concerning the Jews which had escaped, which were left of the captivity, and concerning Jerusalem. And they told him that "the remnant that are left

of the captivity there in the province are in great affliction and reproach; the wall of Jerusalem also is broken down, and the gates thereof are burned with fire." On receiving this sad intelligence, Nehemiah wept, fasted, mourned and prayed to the God of heaven. He loved Jerusalem. It was the city of his God, and though in ruins, he loved her still. No wonder he wept and prayed that a way might be opened whereby he could prove his fidelity to the God of Abraham, and become the instrument in his hands in snatching that sacred spot from the polluting hand of heathenism. The very desolation moved his pious soul and framed his prayer. He acted wisely. As soon as he became aware of the true, deplorable condition of Jerusalem, he began praying. He did not begin to plot and philosophize, but he began to pray.

Just as soon as the Holy Spirit awakens a sinner to a sense of his sinfulness and danger, that moment he should "believe in God," and begin to fast, weep and pray. There is no time to moralize; the case is too urgent; no time to dally; delay is dangerous. "Thy soul is polluted by sin, though it be the effect of the breathing of God." But "God, to redeem it, did not spare his well beloved son." Therefore, you are divinely encouraged to seek its cleansing, and all the promises of the gospel are to the effect, you shall obtain your heart's desire.

Nehemiah went to work cautiously and wisely.

He kept his own counsels. "Neither told I any man what my God had put in my heart to do at Jerusalem." So Christians should not be always divulging their plans to the world, nor be always pouring their burdens, sorrows, doubts and woes, into the ear of their brethren. They should keep their own counsels till the proper time to divulge them. Nehemiah made a reconnoissance during the night. While others slept, he was awake and making strenuous efforts to learn the true situation. "Give not sleep to your eyes, nor slumber to your eyelids" till the danger to which your soul is subjected by sin be passed.

Nehemiah took the precaution to fortify himself with a letter from the king. This letter guaranteed a safe journey through his domain, and it also encouraged him to go forward to the work, for it secured him much important material to be used in building the wall. It required Asaph, the keeper of the king's forest, to furnish the timber to make beams for the gate of the palace and for the wall of the city. So Christians should always strengthen themselves in their journey by taking Christ with them, and be encouraged to labor on by the precious promises, "your labor shall not be in vain in the Lord." "The Lord your God shall fight for you." With the consciousnes of having Christ with us, what work so great that we should fear to undertake? What valley so dark that we should

fear to pass through? What furnace so hot that we should dread to enter? "I can do all things, Christ strengthening me."

Nehemiah went to work systematically. He assigned to each a certain portion of the wall to build, and he required each to build over against his own house. In this he manifested wonderful executive ability. By this means, he was certain of securing a very strong wall, because, if the enemy should make a breach, the workman at that point knew that his own life, and the lives of his household, would be the first to be taken. This certainly caused each to build as faithfully and strongly as possible.

In like manner, those engaged in working out their salvation should work systematically. God requires that each shall build over against his own house, or soul. Secure this first, and then work for the salvation of others. Be concerned for no other, not even father, mother, brother or sister, until you can say, by faith, "I know whom I have believed." Be systematic in reading the Bible, in meditating thereon, in prayer, in benevolence, and in Christian work. Then communion with Jesus will grow sweeter and sweeter; duty will become more and more a pleasure, and worship will soon begin to partake of the ecstasy that thrills the glorified in heaven.

Nehemiah was compelled to face tremendous op-

position from without and within the city. Sanballat and Tobiah, the representatives of all the enemies of God and Jerusalem, were determined that he should not complete the wall. And Judah, a professed friend to the work, tried to discourage him by saying "the strength of the bearers of burdens is decayed, and there is much rubbish, so that we are not able to build the wall."

The church has nothing to fear from open and avowed infidelity, those enemies without her pale; it is only when false professors and pretended friends within her walls rise to kiss her hand that she is in danger. Then, if you are a professed Christian, see to it that you are one in fact, lest your presence prove a clog, rather than a force to push onward the chariot of God, that hitherto has rolled so grandly, bearing its precious freight to the skies. Sanballat and Tobiah; aye, the whole heathen world, may devise their plans, lay their snares and speak their falsehoods; this only awaked renewed energies, clearer sight and more resolute determination on the part of Nehemiah to go forward in his glorious work.

But when Judah's wail of woe is heard, what sadness and sorrow must have come o'er Nehemiah's spirits, and but for a grander impulse, inspired by a sublimer motive than Judah felt, his hands had certainly been weakened, and the work retarded at least. So you have nothing to fear from foes with-

out you. Against all such you can set your face as a flint. The temptations of the world, the glitter of wealth, the allurements of pleasure and the desire for fame will tend to arouse you to greater endeavors, to closer watchfulness and more earnest prayer. The efforts of such enemies may be blest of God to your salvation, while the enemies themselves may have the curse of God resting upon them for their folly. But those enemies within you are not routed so easily. They "stick closer than a brother;" they are part of our very selves. These evil appetites, how eloquently they plead for gratification; these evil passions, how they argue against what both the conscience and the Bible say is right; those evil lusts, how they shout the songs of the syren. Then the conduct of semi-Christians, how weakening to your better resolutions; the high esteem, too, in which mere moralism is held, how cooling to your Christian ardor; then the conflicting opinions as to what the law demands on the one hand and forbids on the other, and the consequent equivocal conduct on the part of many professed followers of Christ—how all this tends to throw the dark shadows of suspicion on the truth. Then, your entire carnal nature being in sympathy with all these illusions and sins, how watchful and prayerful you must be, else you are in danger of making shipwreck of a good conscience, and of becoming dull and stupid when you ought to be bright and perse-

vering. These are the enemies most to be dreaded, and from whose daggers you are in danger of receiving the greatest harm. If you will work out your salvation, it will be in the face of tremendous opposition. For your encouragement, remember, "they that be for you are more than they who are against you."

Nehemiah, because of the multitude of enemies, and their close proximity, armed the builders with weapons offensive and defensive, with bows, and swords, and spears.

Christ's armor is yours, and you must buckle it upon you. "Stand, therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breast-plate of righteousness; and your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one."

Nehemiah required those who wrought on the walls to hold the spear in one hand while they used the trowel with the other; keep one eye on the wall and the other on the enemy; watch as well as pray.

When the enemy saw that the work was rapidly going on, and soon the wall would be finished, they speedily changed their tactics. When Sanballat, Tobiah and Geshem first heard of Nehemiah's purpose to rebuild the wall, they laughed him to scorn and despised him, and said, "What is this thing that ye do? Will ye rebel against the king?" They

looked upon the whole enterprise as impossible; as the wild ravings of a frenzied brain. And even after the work had been begun and had progresssd to a considerable extent, Sanballat sneeringly said: "What do these feeble Jews? Will they fortify themselves? Will they sacrifice? Will they make an end in a day? Will they revive the stones out of the heaps of rubbish which are burned?" And Tobiah joined in the chorus and said: "Even that which they build, if a fox go up he shall even break down their strong wall." Both were wise in their own conceits. They were both mistaken in their conclusions, however. The wall fell not by the paw of the fox nor sneers of foes. The work went grandly on. "And when Sanballat and Tobiah and Gashmu, the Arabian, and the rest of our enemies, heard that the wall was finished, except the setting up the doors upon the gates, they were wroth," and entered into a conspiracy to hinder the work. They first made an effort to entice Nehemiah away from his work by requesting that he should meet them in one of the villages in the plain of Ono. But he answered them: "I am doing a great work, so that I cannot come down. Why should the work cease whilst I leave it and come down to you?" Foiled in this effort, they continued on the same line until they had sent four times the same request, and Nehemiah answered after the same manner each time. Failing in this, they thought next to terrify him, and by this means stop

the work. Sanballat sent his servant, but this time with an open letter in his hand "wherein was written, It is reported among the heathen, and Gashmu saith it, that thou and the Jews think to rebel; and for which cause thou buildest the wall that thou mayest be their king according to these words. And thou also hast appointed prophets to preach of thee at Jerusalem, saying, there is a king in Judah; and now shall it be reported to the king according to these words. Come, now, therefore, and let us take counsel together." Then said Nehemiah: "There are no such things done as thou sayest, but thou feignest them out of thine own heart." "For they all made us afraid, saying, their hands shall be weakened from the work, that it be not done." "I am doing a great work, so that I cannot come down. Why should the work cease whilst I leave it and come down to you?"

How terrible the opposition Nehemiah met with in his most noble and laudable undertaking! There was but one object his enemies had in view, and that was to keep the wall from being built; and in order to do this they tried to entice Nehemiah away. Failing in this, they tried to flatter his vanity; failing in this also, they tried to terrify him with a threat based on a palpable falsehood; but all to no purpose. If you work out your salvation successfully, it will be after meeting with as great opposi-

tion, or greater, than Nehemiah had to contend against.

That Nehemiah was engaged in a great work there can be no doubt. That his convictions were of the strongest nature there can be no question. His efforts in building that wall will stand forever a monument to his fidelity, zeal, energy and devotion to his God and the church. Let us look at the facts in the case, and we will cease to wonder at the zeal and energy that prompted Nehemiah's activities.

Jerusalem was the grand old typical city—a type of the heavenly Jerusalem. It was in ruins; the ploughshare had gone over it; the rubbish was still visible. It was the only spot of ground to which Jehovah held the title-deed. He made the world for men and had given it all to them with this simple reservation. Sometimes the ruins of a city speak more eloquently of former grandeur than the city itself in its palmiest days. Not so with Jerusalem; not a vestage of former greatness remained. The heathen, in all conscience, had as much territory as heart could desire. Why, then, should they object to Nehemiah walling this relatively little spot of ground for God? They did not care to possess it because of its intrinsic value. They cared nothing at all for it as adding to their real estate; but they were determined that God should not have it. Owning all the world besides, they determined to own it, too. God must not have any

portion in this world. Nehemiah took a different view of the case, and he determined to meet the opposing forces of two worlds, and build that wall. God's rights shall be respected. Jerusalem shall be the city of the Lord, till the advent of the Messiah at least. Nehemiah told the truth when he said, "I am doing a great work, so that I cannot come down." The work was great for several reasons, which I will now lay before you for your careful consideration.

It was a great work. First, because of its dimensions and the small force of builders to work at it. There was to be built a long wall, a high wall, a broad wall and a strong wall. Viewed from this standpoint, it seemed almost like a hopeless undertaking.

But, second. It was a "great" work, because its completion alone could preserve the nationality of the Jews, and this was vastly important. If the Jews cease to be a nation, the Messiah's advent is rendered impossible. He must "come unto his own." The Jews were fast marrying and intermarrying with the surrounding heathen, and according to the laws of Judaism, when a Jew married a heathen, Judaism lost one and heathenism gained one. So also when a Jewess married a heathen, the same thing followed. Their nationality must be preserved, else prophecy would be a fable and the world would be robbed of a Redeemer. The com-

pletion of the wall alone could preserve the nationality of the Jews, vindicate the truths of prophecy and give a Redeemer to the world. Truly, the work in which Nehemiah was engaged was a great work.

But, third. It was a "*great*" work, because its completion alone could preserve intact the Mosaic Institutes. The types and ceremonies of the law were the shadows of the coming Messiah. Should these shadows cease, it would be positive proof that the substance that cast them had ceased to exist. Because, while there is a substance there must be a shadow. Christ was the substance that cast those shadows of the ceremonial law, and they must continue till the substance appears on the earth. "Until the day break and the shadows flee away." Says Christ, "I will get me to the mountain of myrrh and the hill of frankincense." The advent of the Messiah was the "day dawn from on high," and as there was no need of shadows to represent the substance, when the substance itself stood present to view, these shadows fled away. The completion of the wall alone could keep the shadows till the substance came. Viewed from this standpoint, then, the work of Nehemiah could justly be called a "*great*" work.

But fourth. It was a "great" work because of the formidable opposition it met with. The whole world was opposed to it, except these "feeble Jews." Nehemiah well understood the great responsibility

that rested on his shoulder. He was working, not for himself only, but for the "truth of prophecy," the preservation of the independence of his own people, the coming of the Jews and the redemption of the world. Is it any wonder that he refused to be enticed or terrified away from his work by the promises or threats of his and God's enemies? Is it any longer a wonder that he mourned, and fasted, and wept? That he acted cautiously, prudently and wisely? That he never put off his clothing save for washing? That he pushed the work from early morn till the stars appeared? All who had lived before and died in the faith of a coming Saviour must not be disappointed. And the millions to come along with the rolling ages must have a Redeemer. The work was great and it was grandly accomplished. What glorious visions must have filled the eyes of Nehemiah when he beheld the finished wall! He could see through the preserved magnificent ritualism of Moses the coming "Shiloh," "the desire of all nations," and that angel throng reflecting the splendors of the New Jerusalem, which chanted the thrilling "*Te Deum*" the night of his birth, "peace on earth, good will to men;" and adown the vista of rolling cycles, he could see the immortal jewels, plucked as brands from the burnings by the hand of the great Redeemer, out of all peoples, and kindreds, and tongues under the whole heavens. The build-

ing of the wall to completion was worthy of such thoughts and such visions.

Yet, great as Nehemiah's work was, it was no greater than each child of Jesus is called upon to accomplish. When the wall was finished, Jerusalem was safe, though in ruins. Nehemiah worked out its salvation, its safety with "fear and trembling."

Now, reader, you have a "soul;" that "soul" is *your* Jerusalem; it is in ruins; it must be walled; it is your business to wall it. God hands each timber down from heaven to put in the wall; it is your work to lay those timbers; no one can do it for you; you must build over against your own house. Your work is great. Observation, common sense and the Bible say begin now. There is no time to be lost. There is too much at stake to hesitate even for a moment. You are in imminent peril; your interests are tremendous; your ruined soul is trembling in the scale; an eternity of weal or woe awaits you. "Work out your safety with fear and trembling." If Satan says, time enough, say "get thee behind me, Satan." If appetite, passion and lust entice, say to them, "I am doing a great work, so that I cannot come down to you." If the Sanballats and Tobiahs of the world and the world below promise you great things or threaten with disaster and death, tell them to get behind you, that you are "doing a great work, so that you cannot come down; why should the work cease while I leave it,

and come down to you?" Remember all the material you are to use in constructing your wall is divine. If you are tempted to lay a timber because it appears to be sound and good, scrutinize it closely, and if it has not the divine stamp on it, throw it away; the enemy will make a breach in your wall just there, and destroy you forever. Judge not by appearances; be not controlled by whims; stand upon the, "thus sayeth the Lord," and the powers of two worlds cannot harm you. Nehemiah's first duty was to work on the wall. God would take care of the city.

1st. God gives the Holy Spirit for you to put in your wall. How easy to lay this divine material, and what a strong wall is made. Did you ever realize or have the consciousness that you are a sinner, and that you ought to flee for safety to the Lord Jesus, the Saviour revealed in the gospel? You could not possibly make yourself feel any such thing. That feeling was in-wrought by the Holy Spirit. Now your duty is to act it out. Flee to Christ; accept him as your Saviour. That is putting the Holy Spirit in the wall. Again, did you ever feel that you ought to be a Christian? That was the work of the Holy Spirit. To act on the feeling is putting the Holy Spirit in the wall; but if you refused to become a Christian, as the Holy Spirit made you feel that you ought, then you quenched the Spirit. It is the work of the Spirit to

create feelings of sinfulness, unworthiness, contrition, sorrow for having been disobedient to our merciful Saviour's commands, and in every instance points the path of duty. To those who walk in these paths the Bible says they are putting the Holy Spirit in the wall, and, therefore, they are "working out their salvation." By no means quench the Spirit; do his bidding, remembering he is omnipotent, and with him around your soul, it is safe, though in ruins.

2nd. God has given his Bible for you to put in your wall. The Bible is divine in every part; therefore put it all in the wall. Put the commands in the wall. "Confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus." Obey; this is putting the command in the wall. "Go work to-day in my vineyard." Go; this is putting the command around your soul. It is only by "doing his will" that you can ever know of the doctrine.

"Do this in remembrance of me." Sit down at the table of the Lord and commemorate his sufferings and death for you. This is putting this particular command in the wall. "Deny yourself of ungodly and worldly lust and live soberly, godly and righteously in the world." Obedience puts this command in the wall. Deal thus with every command in the Bible, and as your calling and election are certainties with God, they will become more and more so to yourself. If you are a child

of Jesus by the regeneration of the Spirit, you are already safe, but it does not seem so to you any more than ruined Jerusalem seemed safe to Nehemiah till he finished the wall; then it appeared to him to be safe.

When a sinner believes in Jesus, that moment he is saved; but it does not seem so to himself. Hence he is "required to work out his salvation," or safety, in order that he may have an inward consciousness of his safety. Saving faith always manifests itself in obedience. Hence James says: "Show me thy faith without thy works, and I will prove to you (not to God) my faith by my works."

Obedience only can prove the existence and power of saving faith in the soul. The more frequently we obey, the clearer the evidence becomes to ourselves that we are the children of God. I apprehend that this is one of the potent reasons why Christ lays so many commands upon us. It is certainly not to secure our salvation. That is secured the moment we believe, but to make it appear to ourselves that we are saved. In other words, no child of Jesus can ever have an inward consciousness of pardoned sin apart from obedience. Christ puts this fact beyond the possibility of questioning when he says: "If ye will do my will, ye shall know of the doctrine." This is the same as if he had said (the antithesis must be true),

if ye refuse obedience ye cannot have the inward consciousness that your sins are pardoned.

A consciousness of pardoned sin, however, is not essential to being saved. Faith unites us with Christ. Yet Christ, through sincere obedience, frequently grants it; and it is what all Christians desire, and it is what we all ought to strive after, because when granted to us, it seems to us that we are safer. Hence the command, "work out your salvation, for it is God that worketh in you to will and to *do* of his good pleasure. If, therefore, you would know of the doctrine, obey the commands; if you desire to know from within that you have passed from death unto life, obey the commands; if you would rise to a higher plain of Christianity, where a more extended, beautiful and bright horizon shall greet your vision, obey the commands. Keep your eye on Jesus, then holiness will become more and more desirable, for He is holy; purity will become more enchanting, for He is pure; worthiness will seem more lovely, for He is worthy. Thus your life will be more and more conformed to the divine model. And as this comes to pass, it will become more evident to yourself that "your labor is not in vain in the Lord." You can then more clearly "read your title clear to mansions the skies." Obedience to the commands is putting the commands in the wall.

God has made many "exceeding great and pre-

cious promises" also. Believing them is putting them in the wall. "He that believeth shall be saved." Believe the promise; this only can put it in the wall. God does not say, he that believeth, and is "good," or feels "worthy," or is certain that he "has passed from death unto life," shall be saved. Neither must you. No. It is only "believe." Goodness is the consequence of obedience, and obedience is the result of Faith.

"Whosoever calleth on the name of the Lord, though he be "vile," "unworthy" and "polluted," "shall be saved." Believe the promise, and as a consequence, you will begin to cleanse yourself from the filthiness of the flesh, and you will realize that your wall is becoming broader and stronger. And that your wall may appear unto you to be very strong—in fact, impregnable, God has given a multitude of promises to be put into it, and as you lay them there (by believing them), it will seem to you that your salvation is becoming more certain; and as you lay them carefully, one upon another, it will seem to you that your "salvation is nearer than when you first believed."

God has also uttered many entreaties. They are designed to fill a large place in the wall. "Turn ye, why will ye die." "*Turn;*" this is putting the entreaty in the wall. The entreaty itself can be of no sort of benefit to you unless you heed it. Heed it and your salvation will seem to you to be nearer

than before. Thus God has given commandments, promises, entreaties, exhortations and threats as material to construct the wall around your ruined soul, so that your salvation, being not only certain, but that it may "appear" certain to yourself.

Then, again, God in mercy has handed us the church from heaven to fill a large place i nthe wall. Some people cannot see any necessity for the church. They say, cannot we be as "good" out of the church as in? They forget that the question of religion is not a question of "good," but a question of faith, which faith can only manifest itself by obedience. Now, God commands that we "come out from the world." "Go work to-day in my vineyard;" "Let your light shine." Leave the church out of the question, then, to obey these commands is impossible. The church on earth and the church in glory constitute but one church. "Part of the host have crossed the flood, and part are crossing now." Still there is but one host of God's elect. Therefore, out of the church on earth, out of it in glory. Nothing but faith unites the soul to Christ; and if the union is not made in this world, it cannot be made in the world to come. Therefore, the moment saving faith is implanted and exercised, that moment the individual is a member of Christ's church. He may not have made a formal union with any branch of the church, but it is his duty to do so, and he will do so the first opportunity that offers. The thief on the cross was

not a Methodist, Presbyterian, Baptist nor Episcopalian; he lacked the opportunity; but he was a member of the church. If he had been permitted to come down from the cross, the "faith" he had would have compelled him to make a formal union with God's people. So, make no mistake on this point. There are many evangelical branches of God's church. Show yourself to be a Christian. Let your light shine; come out from the world. All, without exception, who were out of Noah's ark were in the flood. So all who live and die out of the ark of salvation, out of the church of God by faith, will forever be in the floods of God's anger and wrath. Lose no time and take no chances; put the church in the wall. Christ performs no works of supererogation. If the church had not been needful, He had never handed it from the skies for our good. Then, too, put the sacraments in the wall. You are an adult—believe and be baptized. You are responsible for your conduct; take your place at the Lord's table, when opportunity offers, in obedience to the command of your dear Redeemer, and thus you put the sacraments in the wall around your ruined soul.

All the means of grace are given, that by them and through them you may work out your salvation. Use them. What ample provision has God not only made for the redemption of your soul, but that it may "seem" to yourself to be safe. He has

given you His Holy Spirit—the Bible with its commands, promises, entreaties, exhortations, with all other of its teachings; the church, with her two sacraments, and all the means of grace; all of which is divine material with which to wall your ruined soul.

Lay these timbers as God directs, and your immortality will be safe, not only in fact, but in appearance, too. No enemy can ever make a breach in such a wall. There is no wood, hay, stubble there. Each piece is divine, and being divine is omnipotent. Omnipotence resists all efforts of foes. With your soul thus walled it will be safe, though in ruins.

With the experience of all the ages past standing before me, I would prove recreant to your best interests were I not to sound a note of warning. There is danger of falling into the error of some one of the numerous classes of false builders. There are many earnest, zealous and conscientious builders, the Bible being true, who are most terribly and woefully deceived.

1st. The Moralist. He plumes himself upon his goodness. He is not guilty of any of the common vices of the world; he is terribly severe upon the weaknesses and short-comings of Christians; he never fails to render unto all men their dues, unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's; he is charitable and kind. It is evident, however, that his faith rests upon what he is, not upon what Christ has done, and

hopes that his own good works will commend him to the mercy of his offended God. How dreadful the mistake! He ought to be all that he is if there was no God, no heaven, no hell. He cannot be a good citizen of the State without being a moral man; without being a good man.

But a man may be a moral man and nothing more; a Christian is obliged to be a moral man and something more; and this "something more" makes all the difference that exists between religion and irreligion. He must believe in Jesus, as revealed in the gospel, as the Saviour of all those, and none other, who put their trust in him. As the moral man puts his trust in what he does himself, and not in what Christ has done for him, he is obliged to be lost; not because he is a moral man, but because he is not a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ. He builds his wall of wood, hay and stubble. For what are human goodness, worthiness and meteness? They have not the divine stamp upon them, and ought not therefore to be trusted to save the soul.

Next, the universalist. He loses sight of everything but the mercy of God, and he never ceases extolling it to the skies. The cardinal, gospel fact he overlooks, viz., that he must be born again before he can be the subject of that mercy. As far as God's mercy is concerned, it is infinite, it is boundless, it cannot be too greatly admired nor too much appreciated. The mercy, however, is one thing; to

be the subject of it is quite another thing. Both the universalist and the moralist are wrong. They are leaning on a broken reed. Each has his ladder, but both are too short. The moralist plants the first round of his ladder on the earth. Its rounds are honesty, truthfulness, benevolence, virtue and a want of all overt sins. He ascends nobly and every step he is nearer heaven, but after he climbs up every round of his ladder he is not within ten thousand million leagues of the throne of God in heaven. His ladder is too short. The universalist places the topmost round of his ladder on the throne, but it does not reach to the earth. If he could only get hold of it—could get into God's saving mercy, he could climb to heaven. Justice, however, is an attribute of God, and will cut him down ere he can reach mercy. He is a sinner. The ladder Jacob saw is the only one that reaches from earth to heaven. Then trust not to human morals, for while good in themselves they are not an atonement for your sins; neither with the universalists hope to be saved with that which is God's and not yours by faith. Both are busy walling their souls, but they are building with material not divine. It is wood, hay, stubble and building on the sand. How terrible will be their disappointment when they shall witness the "Hail sweep away their refuge of lies." How important that the soul makes no mistake.

Nehemiah had nothing to do with the city either

in the way of removing the rubbish, building its piers or gilding its domes. His work was on the wall. So, neither have you anything to do with your soul, either in the way of removing sin, making it purer, better or holier; your work is to wall it. God will take care of the city. You are to work out your salvation; God will work in your soul. His power and grace alone can cleanse it. Then, be careful not to waste precious time in trying to do God's work. There is enough that you can do to employ all your time and attention, your energies and powers. Duty is yours; results are God's. Yet, how sweetly the two walk together. Never since the world began has man done his part; that the results of God's working have not towered far higher than he had fondly hoped. God is faithful to his promises and your work is all-important.

Great as Nehemiah's work was, to you individually, yours is far greater. Your all is at stake. Then rise to the level of your privilege and responsibilty. The work being so important, begin it at once. "Put not off till to-morrow that which should be done to-day." Begin wisely. Take the Bible for your counselor; walk as it directs; work where it tells you; invoke the guidance and instruction of the Holy Spirit; in His light live, move and have your being. And as time rolls on His light will grow brighter; your faith become stronger; the glitter of evil will fascinate less; the grasp on the world will slacken;

and as you march on and on in the christian pathway, holiness of life will become more beautiful; the landscade of grace more attractive; the plan of salvation plainer; the entire scheme of redemption grander; spiritual light brighter; companionship with God sweeter, and as your body weakens and sinks toward the grave, your spiritual nature will be ascending the mighty Pisgah of the divine purpose, from whose lofty summit will burst upon your sanctified vision all the brightness and glory, grandeur and sublimity of the temple of God, your everlasting home.

How sweet to rest where Angels dwell,
And lay thine armor down;
Thrice blessed he, supremely blest,
Who wears the victor's crown.

Here we might pause, and say no more to urge to duty. The Christian's end certainly justifies all the means, divinely appointed and required, to secure it. But let us remember that our work just begins when we are saved, (i. e.) when we believe in God. We are to work for the safety of others. Those who built strongly over against their own house, under the directions of Nehemiah, while they were making themselves secure, they were securing the lives of all within the city. And if they had been building solely for the safety of others, they would have been securing their own at the same time. Of all beings in the world, Christians should be the far-

thest removed from selfishness. They should let their light shine for other's benefit. God requires that they become examples to others.

The world must be taught that there is power in the gospel of the son of God. A power to which the world is a stranger. A something that curbs passion, strangles appetite and routs lust. A something that resists temptation, controls conduct, and spurs to activity in the divine calling. A something that revolutionizes where the sword is powerless, conquers where artillery would be madness, subdues and renders docile where mere human eloquence and argument would be vain. This something is what the Christian must manifest under all circumstances even the most trying. And the harder the trial and the bolder the effort, the more will it astound the beholder. This something is grace; divine grace; the result of the incarnation of the son of God; his obedience to the law; his death on calvary and his resurrection from the dead. Appropriate it, and by making it conspicuous in your own conduct, it will result in good to the careless and the unconcerned by causing them to stop and consider their latter end, and at the same time, will redound to the making of your own calling and election sure. While blessing others you will be doubly blest. Then work while the day lasts. "Work out your salvation with fear and trembling," knowing that "God who worketh in you both to will and to

do of his own good pleasure," will soon say, child, it is enough; the battle is over; the victory is won. "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world."

CHAPTER VI.

Christian Experience.

The doctrine of Christian experience is perhaps less understood and less appreciated in proportion to its importance than any other doctrine of our holy religion, unless it be that of prayer. It so immediately concerns our "peace and joy in believing" that we cannot afford to remain ignorant of it. And so important to every child of Jesus is the right understanding and clear comprehension of the doctrine, that God did not leave its interpretation to Jewish Rabbi, or Greek and Roman philosophers, or Christian Divines. In the seventh chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, we have an inspired commentary on this doctrine. Christian experience must be just what the Bible says it is, or it "is *not* what the Bible says it is. If "it is" what the Bible says, then it is a very different thing from what most Christians suppose it to be, but if it "*is not*" what the Bible says it is then the Bible made a mistake, which all agree

this is impossible. The Bible never makes a mistake.

An examination of the seventh chapter of Romans will make the doctrine plain. In the twenty-fifth verse we read, "so then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh" (I myself, serve) "the law of sin." What is included in these two very comprehensive terms, "mind," and "flesh?" In the term "mind" is included all that is convertible in our natures, by the Holy Spirit; the heart, with its affections, desires, hopes, expectations, aspirations etc. These the Holy Spirit converts or turns into a different direction from what they are accustomed to go. Whereas the "desire" was after sin before, now it reaches after holiness and God. In other words the heart is turned to God.

What is meant by that other comprehensive term "flesh?" or what does it include? It includes all those parts of our being which are not convertible by the Holy Spirit. Such as the "lust of the flesh," "lust of the eye," "pride of life," "passion, "appetite," "feeling." These are never converted. The Christian is called upon to crucify these. The command is "crucify the flesh with all its lusts." The Holy Spirit never touches these when he regenerates the soul. The reason why the Christian is called upon to crucify the "flesh" is obvious. He has God's grace within him, and that grace, God says, "shall be sufficient to enable him to do it." Nothing but

grace, can subdue the carnal nature; nothing else can enable man to crucify that nature; hence should God command an unregenerate man to "crucify the flesh" he would command him to do an impossibility, which is contrary to the very nature of God. There is not a command in the Bible to the unbeliever to "pray." He is commanded to "believe" in the Lord Jesus Christ—then pray. "Whatsoever is not of faith is sin." When the Holy Spirit accomplishes the work of regeneration, and the man is thus made a child of God, he is just as great a sinner as he ever was, but he is a saved sinner. He is no longer under law, but under grace, but he is the same man. The woman whose husband is dead is no longer under the law to her husband, but she is the same woman. The death of her husband had nothing to do with the woman, but changed entirely her relations to the law. So, before our regeneration by the Holy Spirit we are under the law; bound to obey it or suffer its penalty. Regeneration changes entirely our relation to the law without making us any the less sinners. It simply takes us from under law and puts us under grace.

A clear understanding of this truth is essential to true peace of mind and joy in the Holy Ghost, is necessary to the inspiring of Christian energy and zeal, and to cause us to love and appreciate our religion. It is the mistake made, just here, that so frequently causes Christians to go with their heads

"bowed like the bulrush;" that arouses doubts as to their adoption into the family of God, paralizes all their Christian efforts, and drapes their spiritual sky with dark clouds and gloomy forebodings.

A change from nature to grace, and not from sin to holiness, is what is usually called a change of heart, and our experiences are accordingly. If we mistake the change to be from sin to holiness, then our experience will be, in fact, the very reverse of what we think Christian experience ought to be, for the longer we live Christians the greater sinners we will see ourselves to be.

The common idea, univeral in the world, and obtaining largely even among Christians, is that when regenerated by the Spirit of God, we are no longer sinners, or if sinners at all, we are not as great sinners as before. Our daily experience is just the reverse of this as we will see presently.

Christians often suppose that they obtain their Christian experience by being made Christians. The fact is, that all our Christian experience comes by living Christian lives. Regeneration is compared to a birth. "Ye must be born again." Does the babe get its experience in the world by being born? or by living in the world? Certainly by living. Then its experience increases daily. So with the Christian, the longer he lives a Christian, the larger will his experience be. Such experience does not consist in feeling a burden removed, but in realizing a

change in our affections and desires. Whereas they were fixed upon the world before, now they are toward the living and the true God.

Paul's illustration of the condition of the sinner in a state of nature, then in a state of grace, and how he is removed from the one to the other, is most impressive and instructive. "Know ye not brethren," (for I speak to them that know the law) "how that the law hath dominion over a man as long as he liveth! For the woman which hath an husband, is bound by the law to her husband, so long as he liveth; but if the husband be dead she is loosed from the law of her husband."

Before regeneration, we are under the law of God, and bound to obey it, or suffer its penalty. We have no option in the matter whatever. Our "mind" and "flesh," the convertible and the unconvertible parts of our being, are on terms of the most intimate friendship. What our "flesh" craves, our "minds" crave also. Thus, while in a state of nature, we are under the power, the dominion of sin, like the woman who hath an husband is under the dominion of law to her husband. We, in and of ourselves, have no more ability to get from under the dominion of sin than the woman to get from under the dominion of law. Praying and weeping will not release her from the law. If she should "give all her goods to feed the poor," that avails nothing. Should she spend her days in filling her neighbor's

ear with the story of her wrongs and sorrows—this avails nothing. There is the law and she is under it.

Neither can reading the scriptures, prayer, nor wishing we were Christians, nor anything that we can do, take us from under the dominion of sin. There is but one way recognized ordinarily by the law in which the wife can be released, and that is by the death of her husband, and this is God's act. Jesus says, "I kill and I make alive." It is his prerogative alone to take human life. So, too, we can only be relieved from the dominion of sin in one way, viz: by regeneration, and this is the work of the Holy Spirit. "It is not by might or power, but by my spirit, saith the Lord." When the husband dies the woman is taken from under the law, but she is the same woman; her status toward the law is changed, that is all. By regeneration the sinner is taken from under the law, but he is the same sinner. His status towards the law is changed, that is all.

The law cannot condemn the woman for marrying again, because the law has no authority over her, for the simple reason she is not under it. So the law cannot condemn the believing sinner, because the law has no authority over him, for the reason he is not under it. He is under grace.

Before regeneration there can be no warfare going on between the members. The "mind" and "flesh" being good friends, they go hand in hand

down the broad road, with precious little compunctions of conscience.

The Holy Spirit working "through the word" and divine providence," arrests the sinner in his downward course, turns his "mind", (i. e.) his heart, to God—but the "flesh," untouched, desires to pursue its downward course. Now the warfare begins. "The flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit lusteth against the flesh, and these are contrary, the one to the other, so the good that I would, I do not, and the evil that I would not, that I do; hence it is no longer I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me." Had the Holy Spirit turned the "flesh" to God, as he turned the "mind," there could be no warfare any more than before He turned the mind. Hence we conclude that the warfare is not between the Holy Spirit and the "flesh," but between the converted "mind" and the unconverted "flesh." And this war will go on until the "flesh" is crucified and dead. Before regeneration, there can be no warfare in the members, because both the "mind" and the "flesh" are under the dominion of sin, not simply under its influence.

To show how sin hath dominion over a man, one more illustration will suffice. We understand the power of the magnet over the steel. It will lift a bar of steel into the atmosphere—move the magnet as you will and the steel follows. It is evident that the magnet is one thing and the steel is another.

Yet the steel has no ability in itself to wrench itself from the grasp of the magnet, neither is it possible for the magnet to throw it off. It is its very nature to hold it. If the steel is ever released from that dominion, the release must be effected by a third party. Take a sledge hammer and break the magnet into a thousand atoms; you have not annihilated a particle of it, yet all the particles together cannot control the steel. Still each particle exercises an influence over it. What sort of influence? A magnetic; the same in kind but different in degree.

What is regeneration? It is the Holy Spirit, which is the hammer of the Lord, breaking up the dominion and power of sin within us, without taking a particle of it out of us. Each particle, so to speak, remains within us, and exercises an influence over us. What sort of influence? Sinful influence, but all together can't control us any more. Hence, as long as we live, we will be under the influence of sin from within, but never again under its dominion. We are as great sinners after our regeneration as we ever were, and we are conscious of it; but we are saved sinners. We are taken out from under law and put under grace, and, whereas, before, we "brought forth fruit unto death," now we bring forth the peaceable fruit of righteousness." Thus our "experience" is just the opposite of what we naturally expect. The carnal nature says, when the change from nature to grace is effected by the Holy Ghost we will then be

separated from sin altogether, both from its power and influence. Our "experience" is, we are as great sinners as we ever were ; our "*faith*" is, we are saved sinners.

No man ever *saw* himself to be a sinner at all until he was made a christian, or believer. He acknowledges, if the Bible is true, he must be a sinner, for the Bible is plain on this point. But he does not *see* himself to be a sinner. What is regeneration ? It is the creating, or implanting, of a spiritual eye, adapted to look at sin, which is a spiritual something, just like the natural eye is adapted to discern natural objects. "Spiritual things must be spiritually discerned," "while natural or carnal things are carnally, or naturally discerned." If a man is born blind, it is impossible for him to see a natural object. The placid lake mirrows the starry heavens, and, standing midway between the two gorgeous canopies, the wonder and admiration of all beholders, still he sees not ; appreciates not ; understands not ; he is blind. The landscape, painted with the colors of the rainbow by the pencil of God, lifts itself to kiss the sky, then sinks to commune with long-drawn shadows and verdant meadows, objects of wonder to every admiring eye, but he is unmoved, for he sees not ; he is blind. A seeing eye is a necessity to the beholding of natural objects around us. A spiritual eye is equally necessary to the perceiving of spiritual objects. A seeing eye is a necessity to the ap-

preciation of the beauty and glory of the landscape, the starry heavens, or the delicate blending of colors on the petal of the rose ; in fact, to the understanding and appreciation of the beauty of any natural beauty. Especially necessary is the spiritual to the appreciating and comprehending of spiritual beauty. And, until this spiritual eye is created and adapted to spiritual objects, (and sin is spiritual), no man ever "*saw*" himself to be a sinner, for the simple reason he has no spiritual vision.

This is also christian experience ; the longer a man lives after he is made a christian, the greater sinner he "*sees*" himself to be ; not that he becomes a greater sinner. Having just been born into the kingdom, he is a babe, consequently his spiritual eye is very weak, and therefore he is unable to see that he is much of a sinner. But as he grows and strengthens in the divine life, his eye intensifies, becomes gradually stronger, and the greater sinner he will appear unto himself to be. The eye of the new born babe is very weak, consequently its horizon is very limited. To it, the world must seem to be very small. But as its eye grows and strengthens, its horizon enlarges, and the world seems to be growing. Then, he is a youth, and he begins to ascend the lofty mountain ; each step upward and his horizon increases—the world seems to be growing larger. He stands upon the top and now he has an almost limitless horizon. He now exclaims, how large this

world is. I suppose the world was about as big when he was born as now while standing on top of the mountain, but it did not seem so to him. The difficulty was not in the world, but in his vision.

Precisely analagous is the case of the christian. The longer he lives in the world the stronger his spiritual eye will become, and the greater sinner he will see himself to be, not that he will become a greater sinner. It is only an appearance, still it is his experience. It is a very common idea among men, both in the church and out of it, that the christian is not a sinner, or if a sinner at all, he is not so great a sinner as he once was; consequently he expects, as he grows in grace, to feel as though he is getting "purer," and "better," and "holier," and further removed from sin. His experience, however, will be the very reverse. Now, if his experience is just the opposite of what he expects and thinks christian experience ought to be, how is it possible for him to enjoy his religion? We see at once, the impossibility, for the reason is so plain. If he thinks grace ought to produce certain manifestations, when in fact it produces precisely the opposite, he must conclude that he is not a christian, —hence, cannot rejoice in his religion. Ignorance of the manifestations grace produces is the fruitful cause of the harrassing doubts that so frequently perplex christians.

The more we grow in grace, the greater sinners

we will see ourselves to be. I have said, and it is true, that it is impossible for a man to "*see*" himself to be a sinner at all, until he becomes a christian. A single illustration will make this fact plain:

A block of common mica—ising-glass—weighing half a pound is a very small thing, yet there is death in it. Let it be hurled by a strong arm and strike you in a vital point it will take your life. Still, it looks like a very small, contemptible thing. This mica has two peculiarities. One is, that it possesses cleavage to almost an infinite degree; the other is, that each particle in it looks like every other particle of it. Tear the block into very thin layers and it will cover a large area. In this condition it looks as though it were a hundred times larger than in its crude, compact form. But, there is no longer death in it. It is impotent to kill now. Still a particle of it has not been annihilated; yet its appearance has been vastly changed. What is regeneration? It is the Holy Spirit creating a spiritual eye, then tearing to pieces the sin within us, and spreading it out before this spiritual eye, without taking a particle of it out of us. We are as great sinners as we ever were, and the evidence to ourselves that we are christians is, that we now "*see*" ourselves to be sinners. But our spiritual eye is very weak at first. We do not realize that we are much greater sinners than we did before; but as we grow in grace our eye strengthens and our sins

seem to grow. This is the appearance, but not the fact; for we are far greater sinners than we yet see ourselves to be.

The way grace manifested itself *to*, and the feelings it produced *in*, the Apostle Paul, are precisely those experienced by every christian in his growth in grace. When Paul was first called into the Apostleship, what did he say? He said, "I hardly feel worthy to be called an Apostle." The inference is, he felt almost worthy;—he felt as though he was almost as pure and holy as his blessed Master. Why did he feel so pure? For the reason that he had just born into the Kingdom, and his spiritual eye was so weak that it was scarcely able to discern that he was a sinner at all. He felt purer then than he ever did again. Paul conformed very closely to the will of God for two years. He sailed seas at the command of his Master; suffered persecution, and met all sorts of opposition, and preached Christ and him crucified, wherever and whenever he could get an audience, consequently his spiritual eye strengthened very greatly. At the end of the first two years of his Apostleship did Paul say, "I hardly feel worthy to be called an Apostle?" O, no! he had grown far beyond that. He said, "I am the least of all the saints." What! is Paul becoming a greater sinner? O, no! he is just seeing himself to be a greater sinner than he ever saw himself before, and this is the evidence to him

that he is developing in the divine life; that he is growing in grace. As his spiritual eye becomes still stronger, Paul will realize that he is a greater sinner than he ever imagined himself to be. Paul continued to conform to God's will, he suffered persecution, ship-wreck, stripes and dungeons for Christ's sake; preached the gospel and proclaimed the acceptable year of the Lord in the face of all sorts of opposition for "four years" more. Hence by conforming so closely to the will of God his spiritual eye greatly strengthened. At the close of these four years did Paul say, "I am the least of all the saints?" O, no! he had grown beyond that. When he turned his spiritual eye, which had grown so greatly (by close conformity to God's will) within himself, he exclaimed, "O! wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from this body of death?" What! is Paul actually becoming a greater sinner than he was six years previous? Oh, no! he has, during these six years grown so rapidly in grace, which is evidenced by the fact of his eye becoming so much stronger that he could see himself to be so much greater sinner than he ever thought he was before. But when he turned his spiritual eye away from himself to Christ, he said, "Thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory." I understand it all now. For these six years "with the mind (the converted part of me) I myself have been serving the law of God, but with the flesh,

(the unconverted part of me) I myself have been serving the law of sin." Paul and Barnabas did not manifest any of the christian spirit in their quarrel and separation. It is very evident, however, that "with the flesh they were serving the law of sin."

Thus, we see that the more Paul did the will of God, the stronger grew his spiritual eye, and consequently the greater sinner he saw himself to be. This was his experience; and it is the experience of every child of Jesus. If you do not see yourself to be a greater sinner to-day, (not that you are a greater sinner) than you did one year ago, it is because you are not a christian. For grace works; it is never idle; it is like leaven in the meal; and as it reveals to us our sinfulness more and more, it makes us feel our unworthiness. And a feeling of unworthiness is the Bible evidence of our adoption into the family of God. To the Centurian who went to Christ on a certain occasion and said, "My servant lieth at home sick," Christ said, "I will go down to your house and heal him." He said, "Nay, Lord; I am *unworthy* that thou shouldst come under my roof." Christ turned to his Apostles and said, "I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel;" not among my Apostles. Why? Because none of them feel so *unworthy*. The common idea that christians as they grow in grace feel that they are becoming purer, and better, and holier, and more worthy, and farther removed from sin, is contradicted by the

very genius of the Gospel, as well as by all christian experience. Instead of growing to "*feel*" like we are getting purer, it seems to us that we are greater sinners; instead of growing to "feel" like we are becoming more worthy, our experience is directly the opposite.

We have seen that, before regeneration, the "mind" and "flesh" are on terms of friendship, walking together the broad road to death, with but little compunctions of conscience. That the Holy Spirit by regenerating, turns the "mind" or "heart" with its affections to God, leaving the "flesh" with its appetites and lusts untouched and unchanged. Now the warfare begins in the members. The "spirit" lusting against the "flesh," and the "flesh" against the "spirit," and these are contrary, the one to the other. Before regeneration there can be no warfare among the members; after regeneration the warfare is incessant, and continues until the carnal nature is entirely subdued; then the soul is transplanted immediately into Heaven. There is a war for all to wage just as long as they live. It is a fight between giants, the "old nature" and the "new." The "old" is not taken out of us, nor changed when the "new" is implanted within; hence it considers the "new nature" an intruder, and treats it accordingly. No man ever saw himself to be a sinner at all before his regeneration; and the longer he lives after this event, the greater sinner he will

see himself to be. This is all easily understood. The Bible sets it forth in a clear light, and in a simple, plain way, and your experience, (if a christian) corroborates the Bible teaching in every particular.

"The good that I would, I do not, the evil that I would not, that I do." This is the experience of every believer in Jesus. Is this not your experience, "When you would do good evil is present?" Have you not formed good resolutions, which have gone down at the approach of the first temptation? Have you never taken your Bible with a firm resolve to learn what God would have you do, and that you would banish every other thought, and not permit your mind to wander while reading the Scriptures? This was certainly a good resolution, and one prompted by your "new nature." But while reading in all earnestness, you had to go back half a chapter to see what you had been reading. Your mind was wandering on business, on pleasure, or you were laying plans for some future enterprise. "The good that you would, did you do it?" The very evil that you "resolved against" is not that the very thing you did? Now, was it you that caused your mind to wander? Or, was it not the "sin that dwelleth in you?" as the Apostle says? It was the "new nature" that prompted you to make the good resolution, and it was the "old, unconverted" nature that caused you to break it. Were you grieved

and sorry that you could not keep your mind for the little season, on what you were reading? Here, then, is the evidence that you are a child of Jesus, a subject of his grace; for grace, and nothing but grace, works sorrow for having sinned. This sorrow is the evidence that you made the good resolution in good faith.

There is something very peculiar in our mental composition, and grace never disturbs these laws of mind. This appears in the fact that we determine on doing a certain thing, and then do directly the opposite; and in nothing is this so frequently the case, as when we resolve to perform christian acts. Did you ever resolve that you would go to your closet, and where none but God could see, you would drop upon your knees and hold sweet communion with him in prayer, and that nothing should draw your mind aside? Then, while on your knees, and offering your heart-felt petitions at the mercy seat, have you not caught your mind wandering, and not at all fixed on Christ or the things for which you were asking? "The good that you would, did you do it? "The evil that you would not, is not that the very thing you did ?" "Was it you that did the evil, or was it not "the sin" that dwelleth in you?" Then, it is very evident that you became no less a sinner when you were made a Christian. I might multiply illustrations "ad infinitum," showing that Christians are sinners, and your

experience would testify to each fact; but it is not necessary; for God has said, "no man liveth and sinneth not;" and also, "he that saith he is without sin is a liar, and the truth is not in him." This settles the question forever.

The question now arises, if it is not "I, but the sin that is within me" that causes me to transgress, am I responsible? Yes, I am responsible, and I must repent and turn away from the sin, and if I am a child of God, the grace that makes me so, will make me sorry for the sinning and cause me to repent. This is the difference between the believer's and unbeliever's sinning—the one sorrows after a godly sort and the other does not. God has obligated himself to forgive the believer's sins, but not the unbeliever's.

To appreciate the importance of the doctrine of Christian experience, all human ideas and opinions concerning it must be eliminated, and the teachings of the Bible adhered to. A "thus saith the Lord" is all important when the doctrine as a whole, or the manifestations of any part thereof, is under consideration. Carnal ideas are sure to lead astray; the Bible only is the infallible guide. Then cleave to the "Word," make it the "man of your counsel and guide of your life." And as you plod along life's rugged pathway, or are tossed upon its tempestuous billows, the consciousness that your hold is on the promise of the Lord, which changes never, will inspire to ho_{ly}

deeds of Christian daring, and as the years roll by the consciousness of victories achieved by grace over the world, the flesh and the devil, will thrill your being and lift to a higher plane where the "Sun of Righteousness" shines so brightly that doubt and despondency can scarcely be felt, while "faith" and "love" and "new obedience" will seal your title to the inheritance with Christ which is incorruptible, undefiled and that fadeth never.

CHAPTER VII.

INWARD DEVELOPMENT OF GRACE.

Grace, being always the same, and working according to certain immutable laws, the effect it produces in individuals must necessarily be the same in kind, though different in degree. In the main all Christians have the same experience, but differences in natural temperament, coupled with different surroundings, make the operations of grace to appear dissimilar in different individuals. This is more of an appearance, however, than a fact. Certain medicines (e. g.) seem to affect certain constitutions differently, but, pushed to an extremity, precisely the same results are obtained in all. Calomel produces a happy effect upon some—the very opposite upon others, but administered in sufficient quantity will produce salivation in all.

Strychnine is a perfect antidote for certain diseases in some; it fails entirely to subdue the same diseases in others, but administered in sufficient quantity will produce death in every one. Likewise, grace seems to act differently in different individuals. In an emotional nature it seems to boil over; in a sanguine temperament it produces firm resolves and untiring perserevance; in a phlegmatic, it fails to remove doubts, and can scarcely excite to plain, Christian duty. It boiled over in Peter, and prompted him to say to Christ, "Though all men forsake you, yet will not I;" it cooled down and Peter denied with oaths and curses that he ever knew Jesus. It made Paul believe all things, hope all things, endure all things, and never, while he lived, did he slacken Christian effort. Thomas would not so much as believe the testimony of his brother apostles to the resurrection of the Lord, but persisted in his unbelief, saying, "Except I put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe." Still, the working and the results of grace were precisely the same in each. It saved them all, and they together chant its praises in the courts of glory.

As to the methods of the inward development of grace, the parable of the leaven furnishes a most beautiful and apt illustration. To this end will we use the parable. The Rev. Wm. Arnot, a wise and safe expositor of the parables of our Lord, says,

"The thought which is peculiar to this parable, the specific lesson which it teaches, is the power of the gospel acting like contagion to penetrate, assimilate and absorb the world in which it lies. The kingdom grows great by penetrating in secret through the masses, changing them gradually into its own nature and appropriating them to itself."

Concerning the specific number, "three," the same author says, "Whether the three measures are understood to point to three continents of the world then known, or to the three sons of Noah, by whom the world was peopled, or to 'spirit,' 'soul' and 'body,' the constituent elements of human nature, an interesting conception is obtained. Each of these three suggestions contains a truth, and that, too, a truth which is germane to the real lesson of the parable." This agrees with the commonly received opinions of a large majority of the expositors of this parable. Then as far as the design of the parable is concerned, we have no controversy. I propose, however, to use it simply as an illustration of the important doctrine now under consideration.

With this understanding, I now proceed to the consideration of the methods, of the inward development of grace.

"The kingdom of heaven" (or grace in the heart) "is like leaven that a woman took and hid in three measures of meal till the whole was leavened." A clear understanding of the nature of leaven and the

methods of its working will not only throw much light on the subject in hand, but will go a long way towards removing the clouds from many portions of our spiritual sky. How does leaven work? It works secretly. Thus grace must work, or it does not work like leaven. That which manifests its presence and working to every eye may have the appearance of grace, but it cannot be grace, and we see the reason why. It is because it does not work like leaven, secretly.

But then again, leaven works "silently." That which attracts attention by its ostentation cannot be grace, because all this is contrary to the working of leaven.

Leaven works gradually. The common idea is that when grace is hid in the heart, or the man is made a Christian by being born of the Holy Ghost, that moment he ceases to be such a sinner as he was before; that by a single bound he rises so high in the divine life that all men can take knowledge of him that he is born of God; but the fact is, he grows imperceptibly and gradually; obeys the laws of Christian growth just as much as the infant obeys the law of natural growth in reaching manhood.

Again, leaven works "persistently." That, whatever else it may be that begins to work with a vim and then wearies, and slackens, and ceases, is not grace, and never was, because it is wanting in

persistence, which is one of the prime constituents in leaven.

Leaven works "effectually," "till the whole is leavened." The leaven that is destroyed by freezing, which may begin to work and stops short of leavening the whole lump, is not the leaven referred to in the parable, for it works till the whole is leavened. So with grace. That which works well for a season, and stops short of permeating the entire man, is not grace, and never was, according to the plain teaching of Christ.

We will sum up the chief characteristics of leaven. It works *secretly*, *silently*, *gradually*, *persistently* and *effectually*. If grace in the heart is like Christ says it is, like leaven in the meal, it must work precisely in the same way.

Leaven cannot contradict its nature ; it obeys its own law ; it is its nature to work ; it cannot help it. So, too, with grace. Its law is work ; it cannot resist it. The moment the leaven is hid in the meal, that moment there is as much unleavened meal as there ever was, nor is the nature of the meal changed by the simple presence of the leaven. There is a new nature in it, but the old nature remains the same ; it is not touched nor changed. Precisely analogous with grace. The moment it is implanted in the heart, that moment the man is as great a sinner as he ever was; neither is *his* "old nature" touched nor changed.

He has a "new creature," "new birth" or "new

nature" within, but his old nature remains precisely the same. His legal status, however, is changed, but he remains the same man. He is a sinner taken from under law and put under grace, but no less a sinner. God recognizes but two classes of beings in this world. They are "believing sinners" and "unbelieving sinners ;" all are sinners alike. Hence the assurance, "no man liveth and sinneth not," but he that believeth (though a sinner) "shall be saved."

Leaven is not indigenous in the meal. Meal is one thing, leaven is another thing altogether. Meal does not hide the leaven within itself, nor does the leaven hide itself within the meal. Their natures are totally different. If, therefore, the leaven finds its way into the meal, it must be taken by a third party from a place, carried and hid by that party in the meal. So it is with grace ; the individual does not hide it within himself, nor does the grace hide itself there. Grace is of God, wrought out and secured by the work, death and resurrection of our Redeemer. It is taken by the Holy Spirit (the third party), brought and hid in the heart of the man. It immediately goes to work in obedience to its own law. It creates different desires, moulds different conduct and opens up a new and living world, with exquisite landscapes to charm the eye, purer waters to slake the thirst, and holier manna upon which to feast. His higher nature is divinely brought into holier association with the blessed Redeemer, and at

once he begins to learn new lessons of the divine love, divine compassion and divine mercy. While it is not the man himself, changing his desires, hopes, anticipations and expectations, but grace working these changes, still it is the man who manifests them and is the witness to its power.

If men were the public bakers in the time of Christ, which is supposable at least, from the fact that they are now, and history, as far as I am aware, does not record any particular time since when they became so, there must have been a good and sufficient reason for Christ to say, "like leaven a woman took." If baking was not the business of women, but of the men, it would have been perfectly natural for him to say, "like leaven a man took and hid in three measures of meal." There is not a single characteristic of the Holy Spirit in the masculine nature, while each and every characteristic (except omnipotence) of the Spirit is found in the feminine nature. And is not this a sufficient reason for the precise phraseology of the parable? The common characteristics of the feminine nature are meekness, gentleness, quietness, confiding, loving and forgiving. These, for the most part, are wanting in the masculine nature, but are they not the characteristics of the Holy Spirit? Woman, though totally depraved, still she is more nearly allied in her very nature to the Holy Spirit, and is more naturally susceptible to his gracious wooings than man. This accounts for

the fact that five-sevenths of the membership of the church in the world to-day are females. If she was first in the transgression, she was also first at the sepulchre. It was a woman who hid the leaven in the meal ; it is the Holy Spirit who hides the leaven of divine grace in the heart.

But why in "*three*" measures and not in a larger or smaller mass of meal ? Doubtless, because the Christian consists of three parts, viz., Spirit, or "new nature," and "soul and body," the old nature. Paul's prayer for the Thessalonian brethren (not for the unbelievers of Thessalonica) seems to teach this, and only this doctrine. "And the very God of peace sanctified you *wholly* ; and I pray God your whole *spirit* and *soul* and *body* be preserved blameless, unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." The unbeliever consists of only *soul* and *body;* that is, the old nature. The believer consists of spirit, or "new nature" and soul and body. The leaven of divine grace works in these three measures in regular order, just like the leaven in the meal, with only this difference: Leaven works only on the meal in contact with it, when that is leavened, then outward still, till the whole is leavened, while grace works on all three measures at the same time, but on the spirit or "new nature" most, on the soul less, and on the body least. The outside of the meal is the last that is leavened ; so the body, or carnal appetites,

passions and lusts, are the last that succumb to divine grace.

For the sake of perspicuity, we will separate these three measures, *spirit*, *soul* and *body*, in order to show how each develops to completeness. You must bear in mind, however, that grace works on all three at the same time, but not to the same degree. The believer is complete in Christ the first moment he believes, but it does not seem so to himself.

If I were asked to define the "new nature," to tell what it is, I would answer somehow in this way, "That it consists of all the graces of the spirit in embryo; in other words, of the least conceivable proportions of each." Grace is omnipotent to save, whether of sufficient degree to be perceived by us or not. It is not much faith, or great faith, or strong faith that saves, it is simply faith. There are no degrees in Omnipotence. If this be true, why does the Bible command us to "grow in grace?" For the simple reason, God would have it to appear to ourselves that we are saved. The great desire of the soul is to possess an inward consciousness of pardoned sin, or, in other words, to know with the same sort of certainty that it has passed from "death unto life," that it knows that two and two make four. Christians forget that natural truth is understood and appreciated by the natural understanding, while spiritual truth must be understood and appreciated with the spiritual understanding. If you doubt the

testimony of your natural understanding, you will be doubtful as to the truth to which it testifies. Faith is the witness to spiritual truth ; it "is the evidence of things not seen." If you doubt the testimony, you are obliged to doubt the truth testified. We see the reason now why it is that true Christians are so frequently harassed with destressing doubts as to their adoption into the family of God. To themselves their faith is weak—in fact, so weak that they doubt its existence—that they have any at all. God would have that faith increased and grow until its power is so felt that you can no longer doubt its existence, nor the fact that you are the Lord's. When you shall have attained unto such a degree of it, however, the fact of your adoption is not one whit more certain than the hour you first believed. Still, to yourself, it seems more certain and you become better satisfied and made more willing to trust God's grace for the future.

While it is true that the leaven of divine grace works on all the three measures at the same time, still it is true that it works on the "Spirit" or "new nature" most, on the "soul" less, and on the "body" least. With this understanding, we will separate the measures, in order that we may more clearly see and understand the methods of grace in our Christian growth.

First, the growth of the "Spirit" or "new nature."

The "new nature" is a *perfect* nature the moment it is implanted, or begotten of the Holy Ghost within us, but it is an incomplete nature. It grows to completeness. We say of the little infant, that it is a *perfect* human being, but an incomplete man or woman. It must grow to manhood or womanhood, and it can only do this by obeying the law of growth. So, too, the moment we are regenerated, we are "complete" in Christ, but "incomplete" in ourselves. If complete in ourselves, why should God command us to grow in grace? The fact that all the graces of the Spirit grow is no proof that they are not perfect in themselves. The question now arises, how or by what means do they grow? The answer of Christ is, "like leaven in the meal." It is the nature of leaven, not meal, to work; it cannot help it. So it is *grace*, not the man, that works; it is its nature to work; it cannot help it.

Faith is a constituent element of the "new nature;" it is one of the graces of the Spirit. As soon as implanted in the human bosom it goes to work, and it makes the man pray; God hears and answers, not because he prays, but because of the faith that prompts the prayer, and God increases the faith within without diminishing the faith without. The prayer of faith is, "Lord, increase my faith." The man never knows to what extent he desires it increased, and his faith never allows him to stop asking for an increase. Faith works on, and with each increase the desire

grows for more, and he prays again, and God hears, not because he prays, but because of the faith that prompts the prayer, and that within is increased without diminishing the supply without. I see now why God never commands an unbeliever to pray; he has no faith, and "whatsoever is not of faith is sin." Their prayer never reaches the ear of God. It is an abomination. To him the command is, believe. When the Philippian jailer fell down before Paul and Silas in the dungeon, and said, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" did Paul say pray?—read the Scriptures?—go to church? No. He said, "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." Faith keeps the believer praying for more, until it attains its full stature.

Love is another element in the new nature. It goes to work and makes the man pray for an increase of love. God hears and answers, not because the man prays, but because of the "love" that prompts the prayer, and he increases the "love" within without diminishing the supply without. Thus "love," as a grace, grows and strengthens to completeness. So with all the graces of the Spirit. Each works prayer and obedience, and through these channels, grace, the same in kind, flows into the soul to increase that already there. Thus the "new nature" or "spirit" is renewed day by day." Just in proportion as the believer lets grace work, (i. e.) favorably or unfavorably circumstances it, the

"old nature" weakens, and as it weakens the "new" strengthens in the same ratio. We see now how the believer grows in grace. God gives grace and then increases it in answer to the prayer that it prompts. Thus God, in one sense, is answering himself. Hence there are no contingencies in prayer. "Ask and ye *shall* (not may) receive, seek and ye *shall* find, knock and it shall be opened unto you." Grace is omnipotent. It is not only able to lift the polluted sinner out of the cesspool of degradation and infamy, but also to transform him into a saint, fit and prepare his immortality, as a precious jewel, to flash the luster of God's throne throughout the ceaseless cycles of eternity. And as the "new nature" develops and strengthens, it manifests itself in the conduct of the man, making duty a pleasure by multiplying his efforts to glorify God, excites new and grander purposes and desires for the salvation of his fellowmen. Holiness becomes more fascinating, the plan of salvation plainer, the grandest conceptions of God shining in his redemption clearer, and the immense importance or value of the soul, as seen in the work of God to secure its glorification, more evident. All this is the result, not of the strivings of man, but of the working of the divine leaven or grace within him. Figuratively speaking, grace is the "new will" that controls the activities of the man. Hence, the more he grows in grace the greater manifestations and clearer the

evidences that he is controlled by a power unappreciated by the world. The "Spirit" or "new nature," the result of the regenerating power of the Holy Ghost, is a perfect nature the moment of its birth, but as the infant grows to manhood, so it attains the fullness of its stature by growing also. The methods of grace, in developing the "new nature" to completeness, are followed in precisely the same way in both "soul" and "body."

As to the soul, this is the second measure of the Christian. When God breathed into man's nostrils the breath of life, and he became a living soul, he was perfect, spotless and holy. His soul was in perfect harmony with God's will. Every pulse beat in unison with the pulse of Deity. But when Adam transgressed God's most wise, holy and eternal law, every faculty of his soul became perverted. His whole soul was changed from right to wrong. So now, man's conclusions, reasoning upon divine premises, are precisely opposite to what they were before the fall. The reasoning of God now, humanly speaking upon certain premises, results in a certain conclusion; man, reasoning upon the same premises, comes to precisely the opposite conclusion. This is not because his methods of reasoning or his logic is faulty—they are not, but because the reasoning faculty itself is perverted. This applies solely to spiritual truth, and never to natural truth. The religious element was neither obliterated nor eradicated

by transgression, but entirely perverted. This is evidenced in the fact that man is a worshiping animal still.

Wherever he is found on the face of the earth, and under whatever circumstances, he has some sort of a god whom he worships. He is incapable of happiness without it, and his character assimilates or partakes of the nature of the god he worships. If he conceives his god to be revengeful, he becomes revengeful; if filled with malice, hate and jealousy, he becomes malicious, spiteful and jealous. As the reasoning faculty of the soul is perverted without being obliterated, the reason why he worships the creature rather than the creator is very plain.

The soul being made all wrong by sin, grace is the only leaven that can ever heal its diseases, and it does it by slow degrees.

First, the reasoning faculty is all wrong by nature, and grace itself cannot right it ordinarily in less than a life-time. The leaven of grace is placed in it by the Holy Spirit, and that grace begins to work, and the man changes his conclusion, but it is far from God's conclusion, reasoning upon the same premises. Grace works on, and presently his conclusion changes again, coming still nearer God's, but still far from it; it continues working, and, reasoning upon the same premises, he comes to a different conclusion, still nearer God's, but far from

it; and thus, continuing to reason upon the same premises, as grace works upon the reasoning faculty, his conclusions are continually changing, until eventually the faculty is entirely righted, and then it comes to God's conclusions. Before transgression, man's reasoning faculty was right, and therefore, reasoning upon any two divine premises, he would come to God's conclusions upon the same premises. Transgression perverted reason, and now he comes to precisely opposite conclusions from what he did before, reasoning upon the same premises. The healing of his reason by the leaven of grace is a gradual and imperceptible process. There is not a Christian living on the earth, six months removed from death and the grave, who, reasoning upon two Bible premises, can come to God's conclusion, for the simple reason that this faculty of his soul is not entirely leavened. "The souls of believers are made perfect at death," and not before. We are required to believe that God's conclusions are right, simply because they are his conclusions—not because they correspond with ours. Nor dare we pronounce them false, because our reason will not conduct us to the same.

God cannot command us to do a thing that would be wrong; therefore faith says that it must be right for us to obey, but reason pronounces the opposite verdict, and the man is perfectly conscientious, believes that he is right. To illustrate: God says the best

thing for you to do (I speak concerning unbelievers) is to "go work to-day in my vineyard." No, says the unbeliever, I am not good enough; I would commit a sin if I obeyed that command; you observe that the opinion of the man is the opposite of God's. "Do this in remembrance of me." I would eat and drink damnation to myself, did I obey the command, says reason. God says the best thing for all men to do is to "confess me before men." No, that is a mistake, says reason. "Come, for all things are now ready," says God. No, I am not good enough, says reason. There is not a living man in gospel countries, out of Christ, but is conscientiously out.

Perverted reason must of necessity come to conclusions the opposite of God's. If I could come to God's conclusions by reasoning upon his premises, I would know that He is as great a sinner as I am, and would, therefore, not trouble myself to obey his commands. But my reason, perverted though it be, is perfectly competent to weigh evidence, and there is such a vast amount of evidence proving that Jehovah is what the Bible says he is, that I am compelled to believe that his commands are right, or ignore the evidence; therefore, it is easier for me to believe that God is true than to prove the testimony to be false. I accept God's conclusions as true by faith. The man who follows his reason in natural things does well, but if he makes it his guide in spiritual matters, it will lead him to hell. "Faith is

our guide" to heaven. It is the purpose of the leaven of divine grace to restore the reasoning faculty to its pristine condition, and it takes the whole lifetime of the man to do it. It works "secretly," "silently," "gradually," "persistently" and "effectually." Thus this faculty gets right, not of itself, but by the power of the leaven of divine grace.

Man's "will" is also wrong by nature, and grace does not make it right at once, but works changes in it as we have seen it do in the reasoning faculty. In his pristine state, man's will merged into God's will under all circumstances. Whatever was God's will was man's will, too. But sin perverted man's will, so now it runs in one direction, and God's will in precisely the opposite. So far from all true Christians being able to say from the heart, under the trying circumstances of life, "the Lord's will be done," there is not one who is removed six months from the grave can say it, except by faith. We know that the "Lord of all the earth will do right." We are compelled to accept this by "faith," however, not by feeling. The case of Job was extraordinary and was designed, doubtless, to show us the results of an entirely leavened "will." When informed of the loss of his cattle and the death of his children, he said, "the Lord gave and the Lord hath taken away, blessed be the name of the Lord," for doing it. When the Angel of Death enters your family and takes a wife, husband or child, does God require you to feel

that it is right? He requires you to believe that it is right, and if you are a child of God you will believe that it is for the best, but you cannot feel it, nor does God require you to feel it. You can truthfully say, "the Lord gave and the Lord hath taken away," and right here you are compelled to stop. You can not say from feeling, "blessed be the name of the Lord," for doing it. Your *will* is not leavened. Never, until your *will* is entirely leavened, can you from the heart say, blessed be the name of the Lord for bereaving me. There is a terrific conflict in the most pious of God's children betwixt *faith* and *feeling* in times of bereavement. Faith says it is right, yet the feelings rebel against the providence.

The divine leaven begins to work on the *will*; it changes it by slow degrees, bringing it nearer God's *will*, but still it lacks much of corresponding with it.

It works on through his whole life-time, changing it gradually but slowly, and bringing it month by month and year by year nearer and nearer and still nearer, till eventually it merges into God's will, but not until it is entirely leavened. This accounts for the wonderful discrepancy existing in the type of religion of young Christians and old Christians. The *old* are almost leavened; in the young the leaven has scarcely begun to work. Hence the different experiences of the same Christian in the different years of his growth. Christianity seems to be an entirely different thing when we grow old to what

it was when we were young in the cause. Religion always remains the same, however, but our view and appreciation of it changes with our Christian growth. As our *wills* become more and more leavened, it constantly changes in appearance from a darker to a brighter hue, from a lower to a higher plane, and from excessive doubt to more cheering confidence.

An illustration of this principle will not be out of place just here. We stand in the vale and take in the beautiful landscape at a glance. While standing still we can note no changes in it; but we begin to move; we ascend the mountain; each step upward extends our horizon; consequently a corresponding change in the appearance of the landscape; as we rise higher, other objects, before concealed from view, heave in sight, but it is the same landscape in the main. It seems to be constantly changing, but it is because we are continually ascending. The appearance is one thing, the fact is quite another thing. So it is with the Bible. As our *reason* and *will* become more and more leavened, we see new beauties in it each time we read it, and we wonder why we never saw them before. The fact is, the Bible does not change; the beauties were always there; but we have just reached the plane in our growth or ascent from which alone they can be seen. And as we continue to grow, other beauties, not yet discovered will be unveiled. It is the Chris-

tian changing, not the bible. The cross of Christ never changes, but our view of it changes with each degree of our spiritual growth. The old disciple draws a thousand consolations from it that the young Christian knows nothing of. But as the young christian grows in grace, these consolations and truths will fill his soul likewise. This is what makes the Bible so wonderful. There are beauties in it adapted to each degree of growth in grace; and as we grow through these degrees its beauties and glories unfold, and when we attain to the highest degree possible, there we will behold facts and beauties and glories precisely suited to that degree and which are hid from all degrees below. We never saw them before, not because they were not in the Bible, but because we had not developed to the state or condition that rendered them visible and appreciable.

I seldom read a chapter that I do not discover some truth I never saw before; seldom meditate upon the solemn scenes of the crucifixion of Christ, but a new and more brilliant panorama of its glories fills the eye of my soul than ever dazzled it before. "Thus the leaven of grace, working in our *reason*, *will* and *understanding*, changes our appreciation from lower to higher, and with each change reveals new truth adapted to entrance the higher appreciation." While the truth itself is unchanging, our view of it is always changing and in the same ratio

that we grow in grace. Thus the leaven of grace works in the soul, carrying the faculties of "reason" and "will" back to the condition in which they were created, and from which transgression caused their terrible perversion.

The third "measure" of the Christian is the "body" or "carnal nature." This is the outside or circumference of his being, and consequently the last that succumbs to the power of grace or divine leaven. When a man is first regenerated, his evil passions, appetites and lusts are untouched and unscathed. They are precisely the same as before. The inebriate, for example, is not beyond the power of the sovereign grace of God to save him. But after his regeneration he has the same appetite, the same craving for ardent spirits that he had before. As now a child of adoption, God calls upon him to crucify this appetite and assures him that "His" grace shall be sufficient to enable him to do it. And by grace in the end he gets supreme control of it. But all the while, it was a tremendous fight. At times it appears doubtful, both to himself and others, which would obtain the victory. But "grace subdues the power of sin." To see a man intoxicated is no evidence that he is not a Christian, but when he gets sober, if he is not sorry for having offended against God, and shows no penitence, then we have the evidence he is not a Christian, because wherever there is grace it works

sorrow and penitence. To hear a man cursing and swearing is no evidence that he is not a Christian; it is the evidence that he is a sinner, but there is not a sinless man on the earth, but if sorrow and repentance are not very marked in him for having done so, then you have the evidence that he is not a Christian. Peter, as he stood at a camp-fire on one occasion, was heard to curse, and swear, and lie. All this did not prove that he was not a Christian, but his subsequent contrition, and sorrow, and repentance prove that he was a Christian all the time. The world's standard of piety is the want of all evidences of sinfulness; the Bible standard is the presence of those evidences that grace alone works.

Unbelief is a part of the "old nature," too. When faith is implanted, there is as much unbelief as there ever was. It is neither eradicated nor lessened. He is as much an unbeliever as he ever was. The fight during his whole Christian life will go on between faith and unbelief. Faith is omnipotent and will conquer and destroy it in the end. So with the entire carnal nature. Grace proves itself the effectual antidote for all its diseases. As the "new nature" by grace grows to completeness, so the "soul" and "body," the other two measures of the Christian, by the same power, are revolutionized and fitted for "mansions in the skies." Yet while we are plodding pilgrims here below, we will realize our unworthiness and our sinfulness;

yet out of the depths while, we cry unto God to have mercy upon us, with transports of joy we sing:

"O to grace how great a debtor,
Daily we're constrained to be;
Let that grace, Lord, like a fetter,
Bind our willing hearts to thee."

'Tis grace that achieves the victory over ourselves, as Christ achieved it over sin and death *for us*.

The question now forces itself upon us with great power. If our salvation is all of grace, where does individual responsibility come in? It comes in just here: we are responsible for "*how*" we circumstance grace. We are free agents. We can circumstance it favorably or unfavorably. The woman puts the leaven in the meal. But a certain atmospheric temperature is necessary to secure its most rapid development. If she puts ice around it, that does not kill it, but is unfavorable to its working. She must build a fire and raise the temperature to a certain known degree; then it works well.

God gives the grace, or puts it within us, and it is our business to circumstance ourselves so that it will work well. God has given explicit instructions how this shall be done. We are responsible if we fail to follow the instructions. I see now why he has given hundreds of commands to be obeyed; promises to be believed; exhortations to be followed; and entreaties to be hearkened unto. It is

in order to create the proper temperature for the most rapid development of the grace given. Consider each of these separately, and our individual responsibilities will be seen clearly.

First, the commands: "Neglect not the assembling of yourselves together as the manner of some is." Obedience is necessary in order to get the right spiritual temperature for grace to work best. I have the ability to obey this command or not; I can go to the house of God if I choose, or I can stay away if I choose. God never commands an impossibility. Should I refuse obedience to the command, I knowingly and wilfully circumstance grace unfavorably. I therefore voluntarily shoulder a most frightful responsibility. "Go, work to-day in my vineyard." To obey this command circumstances grace favorably; to disobey is to circumstance it unfavorably. "Do this in remembrance of me." It is not the purpose of God to make us wiser and better by obeying this or any other command, but to furnish us with fuel to raise the spiritual temperature to the point that will secure the best working of grace. Still no man ever obeys this or any other command, with proper motives, who did not become both wiser and better. "Let your light so shine among men, that they may take knowledge that you have been with Christ." "Confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus." "Whosoever will confess me before men, I will confess before my Father in

heaven." "Whatsoever your hands find to do, do it with thy might." Obedience to these commands, with all others, circumstances the grace within favorably. Now, after I obey all the commands, I am still an unprofitable servant, but I have gotten the spiritual temperature as high as obedience can raise it. The purpose in commanding, is that we shall have the means in hand whereby no mistakes may be made in securing the right temperature for the most rapid working of grace. The reason why so many Christians develop so slowly is easily understood. Their obedience is not what it should be. God has given say a hundred commands to obey. If they obey only ten, is the spiritual temperature raised to the proper degree for the best working of the divine leaven? If they obey twenty, is it not brought nearer the right point? If fifty, do we not observe a marked difference in his Christian growth? Do we not see some christians far more consecrated than others? And are they not those who yield implicit and perfect obedience?

It is very evident from the clear teachings of the Scriptures that if we would grow grandly in grace we must be obedient christians. It is equally clear that our obedience is not meritorious, but a plain duty. It is not the obedience that develops us, if it was, then there would be merit in it ; still no one can develop without it ; hence it is a duty. Obedi-

ence, then, bears the same relation to grace in the heart as the proper temperature of the room bears to the leaven in the meal. As the warm room is the right condition, or most favorable to the working of the leaven, so implicit and perfect obedience is rightly conditioning grace for its most rapid development within us.

The promises of God were given for the same reason the commands were. Why has God promised so much, and requires implicit faith at our hands? It is to secure the right conditions for the working of grace. He would have our faith increase, and it can only do so by exercise. Believing the promises causes the grace to work an increase. When we have believed all the promises, then we have conditioned grace as favorably as possible through this channel. The same is true of the exhortations and entreaties. When we obey all the commands, believe all the promises and heed all the exhortations and entreaties, then, and not till then, is the grace within us circumstanced as God would have it be. Then the right temperature is obtained, and grace, divine in its essence and working, manifests its power in subduing the evil propensities of the carnal nature; in controlling, to a great degree, the perversity of the "will;" ennabling the true disciple to aim more accurately, and strangle his sinful appetites passions and lusts; in short, lifts him to a higher

plane, where new and grander discoveries of God's goodness, love and mercy are visible.

Not only is obedience to the positive commands of God essential to rapid advancement in grace, but our surroundings must be of a pious nature. We are responsible for our companionships. God would not only have us distinct, but separate also from the ungodly. His advice is "Go not in the way of sinners, and sit not in the seat of the scornful." We, therefore, have no right to choose such surroundings as are, necessarily, unfriendly to Christian growth. This is running, with our eyes open, into the meshes of temptation, and how can we expect God to bless us when we put ourselves where we are confident he would not have us be? It is unwise, therefore, for any consideration, to step beyond the bounds of Christian propriety and choose surroundings unfriendly to the growth of grace. Righteous Lot tested it to his sorrow. So far from being encouraged and strengthened to "fight the good fight of faith" by congenial companionships, his "righteous soul was vexed." The fine pasturage and abundance of water were not a just compensation for his spiritual cravings and losses; besides, the hard earnings of years evaporated in smoke or turned to ashes.

The young man of a pious family, reared in a Christian community, attends the weekly prayer-meeting, is punctual in attendance upon the means

of grace and a student in the Sabbath-school. He is made a subject of grace by the Holy Spirit. His surroundings and associations are very favorable for developing in all the Christian graces. His growth is so rapid that it becomes a marvel and elicits the encomiums of all Christians. What is the cause? His surroundings are favorable and the spiritual atmosphere such as to cause grace to work to the best advantage. He has the ability to continue as he is. But he hears of an Eldorado where fortunes are made in a short time. His imagination is dazzled at the prospect of great wealth and he decides upon the venture, and contrary to his Christian impulses and better judgment he makes the move. His surroundings now are totally different. In his new home the sanctity of the Sabbath is not recognized. Profanity rings in his ear from early morn till midnight. The leisure hours are passed in gaming and revelry. How changed his circumstances. Ice surrounds the spiritual leaven and to human appearances it has ceased its working. He is a sinner still, and sin within has affinity for sin without, as grace within has affinity for grace without ; and, consequently, his surroundings being so sinful, he begins to develop on the wrong side ; begins to manifest his sinfulness ; and as these manifestations become more common and apparent, in the same proportion does his reverence for truth and righteousness diminish. He is no longer the active, zealous, earn-

est Christian he was before. Why? Because his surroundings are different. They are now inimical to his spiritual interests. Is he not responsible for his present condition? Can he expect the smile of God to accompany his labors and the Spirit of God to bless his soul? He has not gone there as a missionary to reform the morals and Christianize the people. He went for the sole purpose of gain, and the consequence is leanness of soul. But the grace within him is not dead; it is working, but in its own peculiar way. It first causes restlessness; this grows into more serious thought, and this develops after awhile into a thorough loathing of himself and his surroundings, and the determination is formed to bid farewell to such associations and seek a more congenial clime. He returns to the place of his nativity, into the same pious home, to the Christian community, the church, the prayer-meeting and Sabbath-school. Now he has again favorably circumstanced the grace within him; the spiritual temperature is right for the working of the divine leaven, and what is the result? He begins to grow, to human appearances, just where he left off when he changed his abode. During the *interim* the grace of God in his soul was not dead, but it seemed to sleep.

We now see where individual responsibility begins and what it is. While our salvation is all of grace, God holds us responsible for the way we circumstance the grace, and while regeneration is in-

stantaneous, the changes that grace effects in our tastes, habits and experiences are gradual and day by day imperceptible. Thus we "grow in grace and in the love and knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ."

Some Christians are much exercised about their regeneration. They are extremely doubtful as to whether the Holy Spirit has wrought this work in them or not. They often ask themselves the questions: Am I a child of Jesus? If I have really passed from death into life, could I have so little appreciation of Christ's work for me? Could I love so little, if indeed I love at all? Such questions can never be answered by asking. What such Christians should be anxious about is not whether they have been born again, but whether they are obeying the commands of Christ, believing his promises and heeding his entreaties. It is the will of God that we do all these things. And He has promised: "If ye will do my will, ye shall know of the doctrine." Grace will make itself understood only when we are walking in wisdom's ways. We should be anxious to perform Christian duty, not so much about the work of God in us. Still, it is impossible for us to divest ourselves of our Christian obligations and not know that we are the Lord's. The performance of the one necessarily secures the other.

Is it your desire to know that you are a child of Jesus? Do his will and you shall know it. Is it

your desire to have the consciousness that you are growing in grace? Obey the commands and believe the promises and you shall have it. It is not so much the consciousness of pardoned sin you need, but grace to do your duty. It is *reasonable* that you should desire to know positively that you are a child of Jesus first, then do his commandments. But you are to remember that reason is perverted. God says, "You must do my will in order to know that you are my child." This conclusion of God's is directly the opposite of yours. Still you are to believe that it is the best for you.

Having plainly noted the methods of grace working in the man and some of its manifestations, I now ask, are you personally a subject of it? Is Christ formed in you the hope of glory? Are you obedient to the requirements of the gospel? It is not enough to know how grace works in the heart. It must work in yours or you are lost forever. O man! awake to righteousness ere the thunder of God's anger rolls o'er your doomed immortality. "Seek ye the Lord while he may be found; call ye upon him while he is near." "Let the wicked forsake his way and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him turn unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon." Now, while mercy lingers, "cast thy burden on the Lord."

CHAPTER VIII.

OUTWARD MANIFESTATIONS OF GRACE.

The Bible presents us with many beautiful and expressive illustrations of the presence and power of divine grace. In fact, it is a book of illustratio s, making every part of our holy religion plain and simple. The universe is an illustration of God's omnipotence; its preservation, of his goodness. Nothing short of Almighty power could speak into existence unnumbered worlds, clothe them with light and glory and send them rolling along, each in its own orbit, through illimitable space. Omnipotence alone can preserve the perfect order that everywhere exists, and render the movements of this vast machinery subservient to the highest interests of both angels and men. It illustrates the inward workings of grace by the leaven in the meal, and its outward manifestations by the cedars of Lebanon and the fruit-bearing palm-tree. The Psalmist, in one of his most poetic and ecstatic moods, condenses a whole volume into the one short sentence, "The righteous flourish like the palm-tree."

The palm-tree figures very largely in the Bible. The angels of heaven are represented as standing before the throne of God and of the Lamb, "clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands." When Jesus made his triumphal entry into Jerusalem, it was over the palm-branches the hands of love had strewn

in his pathway. In short, the palm is an "emblem of constancy, fruitfulness, patience and victory." Almost every phase of Christianity is marked by the peculiar characteristics of this tree's growth and appearance. And to understand how it grows will give us a clear conception of the manifestations of grace, which, the Bible assures us, are like it.

Notwithstanding the fact that the Christian's conduct, he being also a sinner, is so equivocal, sometimes walking in the ways of righteousness and then in forbidden paths; sometimes being controlled by the "old nature," then by the "new," still the visible stamp of grace upon him marks him as certainly a child of Jesus, as the peculiar characteristics and appearance of the palm-tree distinguishes it from the noble oak.

The palm-tree, as an illustration of growth in grace, and the manifestations of the fact, is as beautiful as it is forcible and instructive. The lessons it teaches are so simple, and yet so vastly important, that a careful investigation into its peculiar characteristics will set forth the subject now under consideration, if not in a new, still in an encouraging and impressive light.

We will now state a simple proposition, which almost partakes of the nature of an axiom. The Christian *grows* like the *palm-tree*, or he does not *grow* like it; if the former, then it is very different from what most Christians suppose such growth

ought to be; if the latter, then Inspiration made a mistake, which is impossible.

The all-important question arises, how does the palm-tree grow? What are its peculiar characteristics?

It grows from the center outward. All other trees, except this species, grow on the circumference, and in northern and temperate climates their trunks grow for the most part in winter. In the spring of the year, when the sap begins to flow, the trunk ceases growing, and its strength is thrown into the branches and leaves. Hence, annual rings are formed, which mark the cessation and beginning of the growth. In the palm-tree there are no rings, for the simple reason that it never ceases growing. What are rings in the oak may be called ribs in the palm, and they grow at right angles to the center.

The Christian's growth is like the palm-tree, in that he grows from the heart outward. "With the '*heart*' man believeth unto righteousness," or unto right doing. The affections have been changed by the Holy Spirit; have been turned away from the things that perish, to a degree, at least, and now they are entwining themselves around the things which are eternal. This causes a marked difference in conduct, and the reason is obvious. The things we love, we will make efforts to secure, while those we hate, we will strive to shun. The enter-

prise in which a man's heart is engaged will secure his best efforts to make it a success. Difficulties, which to others less interested seem insuperable, will be brushed aside and the enterprise pushed to completion. The man's heart is in the matter.

Thus it is the Christian engages with his whole heart, mind and body in the great work to which God has called him. Called with a "high calling," and appreciating, to some extent at least, the vastness, grandeur and eternity of the results, he rises above obstacles, surmounts difficulties and presses his own "resistless way," looking unto Jesus, the "author and finisher of his faith," for all needed grace and strength. In whatever field he is called to labor, there he finds duty a pleasure, and his work brings with it a rich reward.

The Sabbath-school teacher is as truly called of God to his special work as the minister of reconciliation is called to preach the gospel, and, if faithful to his trust, will as assuredly hear the divine blessing pronounced, "Well done good and faithful servant, because thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things; enter ye into the joys of thy Lord." The Sabbath-school teacher, therefore, whose sole purpose is to glorify God and save souls, is not frightened away from duty by a cloud the size of a man's hand, or a gentle shower, or a chilly breeze. When his heart is in his work, he meets all sorts of obstacles,

overcomes them, and wonders why they should have ever been considered at all as standing in the way of duty. The very things considered obstacles to all others less in earnest, prove incentives to him to redouble his energies. If, however, any selfish motive prompts to the undertaking of religious work, the hand will soon falter and the heart fail, while he whose heart is engaged in any religious undertaking never become discouraged, knowing that the "lot is cast into the lap, but the disposing thereof is of the Lord."

Each of the Old Testament worthies illustrates this fact, and their achievements prove that their hearts and hands were in every good work. So, too, Christ's heart was in the work he came into the world to accomplish; therefore, neither his persecutors, nor Pilate, nor Herod, nor Calvary could stand in the way of his success. The apostles also had but one desire, one motive, one prayer, and that was that Christ's atonement should be magnified and the world glorified; hence they braved the dangers of land and sea, bore down every obstacle in their pathway, could not be terrified by threats, faced death in its most dreadful forms, and passed, with one exception, through the gates of martyrdom rather than their desires should fail. The reformers dug down mountains of opposition, built bulwarks around the truth, faced a gainsaying world, hurled back into their faces the anathemas and Bulls of Priests and

Popes, broke the iron bondage of superstition, holding captive men's souls, that the glorious light and liberty of the Son of God might bless all mankind. Their hearts were in their work.

And for the same reason we behold the wonderful progress the church is making to-day in all lands, against the most determined opposition. The "Lamp of Life" is burning brightly in the hearts of the mighty "hosts of God's elect," which is flashing its lustre into the darkest corners of the world, and gives the earnest of a brighter day, even the redemption of the promise that Christ will reign King of kings and Lord of lords forever and ever. It cannot be doubted, however, that many who have named the name of Christ, go forward (in obedience to his command) with indifference, and manifest the fact that their heart is not in their work. All such should pause and seriously consider whether their profession may not be solemn mockery. Twenty-two thousand who sprang to arms at the sound of Gideon's war-trumpet, when the test was made were found wanting. They were *faint-hearted*, afraid of the enemy and naturally preferred to return to the safety and quiet of home, leaving only ten thousand to do battle for the Lord. Even this number was again reduced, but this time for another reason. The twenty-two thousand had not their hearts in their work and, therefore, failed. The righteous grow like the palm-tree—from the heart outward.

Another characteristic of the palm-tree is, it grows to a greater height than other trees in its native land. During much of its growth, its appearance is like other tender growths. When it first peeps above the ground, it looks like other germs. There is a necessity to scrutinize it closely and carefully in order to determine whether it is really a palm or not. This is very much like the young Christian. His conduct is but little changed from what it was before; there is no very marked difference between him and others, who make no pretentions to be religious. There is a necessity that he be watched closely, and for sometime, before it can be positively affirmed that he is a spiritual palm, but this fact does not make it any the less certain that he is. Just in proportion as the palm-tree grows, in the same proportion does the difficulty of distinguishing it from other shrubs diminish, yet being smaller than the bushes and brambles around, it cannot be seen at a distance. So it is with the young Christian. As he grows in grace, the difficulties in the way of pronouncing him a Christian vanish more and more; still he is in the shadow of his appetites, passions and lusts. These often bear down upon him, and, to human appearance, seem to crush to death the last vestige of Christian principle; but it is only an appearance—it is not a fact.

The palm grows until it lifts its head above the surrounding shrubs, still it is in the shadow of the

great oaks. If a near-enough approach is made, there will be found no difficulty in deciding now that it is really a palm. Its features, common only to the palm, are so marked that it cannot be mistaken. It cannot be seen at a great distance, however, because of surrounding and taller objects. Thus it is with the Christian; he grows until he gets above his appetites, passions and lusts, and can, therefore, resist their demands, and it is not so difficult now to pronounce certainly upon his adoption, still he is in the shadow of both scientific and philosophical scepticism. Infidel scientists and philosophers can propound a thousand questions he cannot answer; but he has grown sufficiently in grace so as not to be troubled because of his inability to answer such questions, much less do they shake his faith and confidence in God. He has already learned that religion or grace was never designed to open up the intellect and fill it with arguments to confound the logic or answer the questions of sekptics. Its purpose is to convince the world of its power in causing a holy walk and conversation, against which there can be no arguing; but, on the other hand, proves conclusively that the soul is being lifted above the world, and is being borne upward to the throne of God.

The palm-tree grows on until it is as tall as the surrounding oaks, and it now revels in the sunshine of heaven like them. It can be seen at as great a dis-

tance, and can be known as certainly. The Christian also grows until he is as tall in his experience as the infidelity around him, and is now prepared from within to give a reason to skepticism for the life he lives; he can now hold his hand in argument with the skeptic, who recklessly pronounces adversely to the claims of his religion. And just here, it is well to put older Christians on their guard; remind them of the fact that they were once young in the cause of Christ, and that their views of Christian conduct are very different from what they once were. The mantle of charity for the weaknesses of young disciples is too frequently observed to be very narrow. Often harsh censure is indulged, where a little kind instruction and sweet encouragement would be far better and more becoming. The old palm, towering high in air, has no right to look down upon the young and tender one, contending for its very life with the bushes and brambles larger than itself, and say, you are no palm, because you are not as tall and strong as I am. Strength and height are not evidences of an unlike nature. The young palm is as certainly a palm as if it was the tallest of its kind in the forest. A child is as much a human being as Mathuselah was, if not as old. Old Christians should caution the young against the unseen breakers before them, but should they be carried by the current into the whirlpool, a helping hand

should be extended and not words of censure spoken. "The righteous flourish like the palm-tree."

The palm-tree rears its head high above the surrounding forest. The traveler sees from afar only a black speck leaning upon the sky. He exclaims, a palm! He cannot see the leaves nor trunk. How does he know it is a palm? Because of its height. No other tree is so tall. He is as certain that it is a palm as if near enough to see its trunk and count its leaves. The Christian grows the same way. Young Christians seldom become famous for piety or a very high type of prudence. There are exalted degrees of growth, yet older ones are seen from far. How tall Martin Luther, Bunyan and John Knox and Whitfield, Wesley and Chalmers grew! Can there be a doubt as to whether they were pious or not? Rev. Charles Spurgeon—the eyes of the whole civilized world are upon him. There is no possibility for him to be mistaken for an infidel. He towers above infidelity as grandly glorious as the sun above the earth. There is no necessity to draw nigh and scrutinize him closely in order to determine whether he is a spiritual palm or not. His spiritual height, power and influence are seen and felt wherever the gospel is preached and Christianity is named. The Christian can grow to a towering height.

Another characteristic of the palm-tree is that it grows best by running streams. It requires a vast

deal of moisture to make it flourish, and yet it does not necessarily die when planted in a desert.

What a striking picture of a Christian! He flourishes only by the river of grace. John, in his vision, saw "a river of water of life, proceeding from the throne of God and the Lamb." Grace comes from God and lifts the soul back to God. Always by this river he is ever drawing grace up into his spiritual composition, like the palm roots suck in the water from the flowing brook. It takes all the moisture it needs and there is plenty left to flow on for other trees, grass and shrubs. As the Christian is hourly in need of repentance, faith, humility and all the graces of the spirit, he draws of each as much as necessary from the flowing river that laves by his side and leaves an abundance to flow on for others' good. Move as he may, change his position as frequently as he will, by a most wonderful provision in the divine economy, this river follows him, as Israel in the wilderness was followed by the stream from the smitten rock; it is ever within reach, and all serious observation proves that he who frequents and drinks of its waters most expands and grows the best.

Transplant the palm into the desert and it does not die, but it seems to die. Its leaves wither, dry and turn to dust and are carried whithersoever the breezes blow. But the death is only apparent, for all the while the tap-root is growing downward, and

when it reaches the moisture, then the evidences of life appear and it grows upward.

So do the righteous grow. When in the moist, spiritual atmosphere, evidences of life are many and certain. The pious family, church, Sabbath, prayer-meeting, sacraments and Bible all tend to nourish the grace within, and create a desire for more, which is always just in reach, and drinking thereof causes rapid spiritual growth and a wonderful increase of spiritual power. But take the Christian out of such an atmosphere, and from all his favorable surroundings, transplant him to the desert of skepticism, where means of grace and hallowed associations are altogether wanting, soon will a withering process begin, and the appearance of spiritual death will settle down upon his soul. All his Christian activity, zeal and energy will wither, dry and turn to ashes to be dissipated by every breath of skepticism that comes sweeping by. But all this time the unseen roots of grace are striking downward, and as soon as they reach the moisture from the ever-flowing river, evidences of spiritual life will again become visible, and that apparently dry and parched trunk, will begin to expand and grow, proving that it was not dead except in appearance. Grace being omnipotent, no power can kill it. "The righteous grow like the palm-tree."

Another striking peculiarity of the palm-tree is it grows straight and perpendicular. Bend the

young palm down per force, put a weight upon it that it cannot throw off, and just beyond the weight it will put up straight. It cannot be compelled to grow horizontally, nor can it be coaxed, persuaded or trained in that direction. Its very nature is to grow heavenward.

Precisely similar is the growth of the Christian. The moral man, as well as the profane, trim their sails to suit every breeze; and especially the latter, when with the profane will be profane, with the gambler will gamble, and with the blasphemer will blaspheme. Not so with the Christian. When with these classes, he proves that he does not belong to any of them. He grows straight; and there is no better criterion by which to distinguish a false professor of religion from a genuine one than by the companionships chosen and delighted in. The Christian's motives, purposes, sentiments, desires, expectations, hopes and aspirations are heavenward; they are all above and beyond him, and though the world may gild its pleasures, they do not fascinate; hold out inducements to walk in devious paths, he scorns them; promise riches, honors and high position on condition that he will deny his God, he answers: "Get thee behind me, satan." No power can overcome him, "neither height nor depth, principalities nor powers, things present nor things to come, nor any other creature can separate him from the love of God."

He grows like the palm-tree, in that he grows straight.

Another distinguishing feature of the palm-tree is, that its trunk is full of rugged knots, ugly and uncouth excrescences. This is not accidental. It is caused by the huge leaves falling off as the trunk rises. All the leaves are borne at or near the top. Wherever a leaf becomes detached there is an ugly excrescence. But these do not destroy the palm.

Very like this is Christian life and character. These are both filled with the ugly knots of weaknesses, failings, short-comings, sins of omission and of commission. These are the things that the world sees, and because thereof condemns the Christian. These are the visible; but they do not destroy the man's Christianity. As the tree could not be a palm if void of knots on its trunk, so the man without short-comings and failings would not be a sinner, and therefore could not be a subject of grace. His failings are evidences of the fact that he is a sinner still, but none whatever that he is not a Christian. "No man liveth and sinneth not." The knots on the palm do not grow from the centre of the tree, they are altogether on the outside. Neither do the weaknesses, failings and short-comings of the Christian grow from the heart, they are contained in and grow out of the carnal nature, and are therefore visible. The heart reprobates them; in other words they are on the outside of the man. The tree with-

out a knotty trunk is not a palm, and if it were possible to find a man without short-comings it would be proof positive that he is not a Christian, because then he would be originally "pure," "worthy" and "good," therefore he could not be a subject of grace.

The world judges unjustly, not because it desires to do so, but for the reason that it is totally ignorant of the evidences of grace. It invariably confuses sin with a want of grace, and because the man is a sinner concludes, for this reason, that he cannot be a Christian. The world is far more honest in its decisions, though they are always adverse to Christianity, than it ordinarily gets credit for being. While we are sure that none but sinners can possibly be subjects of grace, still there are, by far, too many evidences of sin marring Christian life and character. There should be more of the "crucifying of the flesh" practiced, and to a greater degree than is sometimes manifest. Still it remains true that the "righteous flourish like the palm-tree."

Another peculiarity of the palm-tree is that all parts of it are useful. Each part can be turned to good account. Its bark is useful for fuel; its woody fibre for fabrics; its leaves for various things; its fruit for food, and its roots contain medicinal properties.

Thus it is with the righteous. His head is useful to devise great things for the glory of God and the

conversion of the world; his hand to execute; his pocket to supply the things that are necessary, and his feet to run in the way of the commandments. The man whose head is right but refuses to use his hands to bring about grand results, is not growing like the palm-tree. If there is a single useless member, this fact proves that he is not growing symmetrically; he contradicts his pattern. The righteous grow like the palm-tree, in that each and every member of the body is not only useful, but is constantly brought into active use in his "high calling."

Still another peculiarity of the palm-tree is that its fruit grows just below its leaves; is nearly concealed from sight by the leaves. The righteous grow in the same way. They obey the divine command: "Let not your left hand know what your right hand doeth." The leaves of the palm are immensely large, and curved from either side downward. The fruit is enfolded, to a large extent, thus concealing it from view. If you would observe the fruit, you must approach the tree and examine closely. The Christian who, perchance, extends a contemptible relief to some one in extreme suffering, and then devotes a day to telling of his wonderful benevolence and the great amount of suffering he has relieved, is not obeying the command, "Let not your left hand know what your right hand doeth," nor the other scripture injunction, "Let not your good be evil spoken of;" for he who boasts his

liberality is worthy only of the contempt of the good. Christians perform their good deeds in quiet, not to receive praise of men, but to benefit their fellows and glorify God. The Pharisee sounds his trumpet to call men to witness how eloquently he can pray; a very striking contrast with the manner in which the palm bears its fruit.

That fruit which is sweetest and most acceptable to God is borne unostentatiously and quietly. As opportunity offers, the hand moves to help the feeble, encourage the timid for God's glory, while relief is being kindly afforded the needy. In every department of Christian work the same meek and gentle spirit is visible, while earnestness, zeal and determination appear in the doing of all things the hands find to do, whether in the family, community, State or world. The Christian heart cannot be bound to the narrow precincts of home, but God-like in its reachings, it takes in the well-being of the whole human family.

Another peculiarity of the palm-tree is it never misses a crop. The first fruit it bears is the most indifferent and there is less of it; but year by year its production increases; the last crop it bears is the largest, the sweetest and the best.

Precisely analogous is the growth of the righteous. The evidences of the presence and power of grace in a young disciple are less deeply marked, more equivocal and consequently less certain than

in the old. They have to contend with the exuberance of youth when all the impulses are strongest and imagination is sketching upon the canvas its most brilliant pictures of the future. But as the young palm is as much a palm as the older tree, so the fruit first borne by the disciple, although less in quantity and more indifferent in quality, is as certainly the product of grace as that of the more mature Christian. As an illustration of this fact, take the principle of forgiveness. How quickly a young Christian resents an insult. It is next thing to impossible for him to forgive the injury; yet development in grace through a whole life time will unfold this grace until its mantle will take in the world. In his last days, it is next to impossible to insult him. The same is true of all the graces of the spirit. He grows like the palm-tree as long as he lives, and the fruits of righteousness multiply all the while and become sweeter and better.

Again, there is a *great variety* of palms; some writers say above three hundred. Whether there be so many or not is immaterial. The fact, however, remains.

There is a great variety. The types of piety, visible in the church, are numerous and in each individual are constantly changing. As growth in grace advances, the christian's ideas and opinions concerning the gospel itself, change. You have not the same idea of religion, if you are a child of

Jesus, that you had twelve months ago. This is evidence that you are on the ascending scale. Your spiritual horizon becoming more extended; new and brighter objects gro wing up into your landscape; more and brighter light thrown upon the spiritual panorama of glories ever passing before your vision; your energies and impulses manifest to yourself the fact that you are developing in the divine life. The same type of religion, the same degree of piety, the same manifestations of grace are neither desirable nor to be expected in all christians. Such a thing would destroy individuality; would necessitate the re-moulding of natural temperaments, dispositions and tastes, and destroy all that variety which is just as essential to the fascinations of religion as it is to the beauty of the landscape. If all the stars were suns, and all the plains and valleys mountains, and the rivers oceans, not only would nature be stripped of all its beauty, but disaster ruin and death would hold high carnival amid what now are scenes sufficiently enchanting to fill with with admiration angels' eyes.

Variety is not only necessary, but as essential to the very existence of beauty in our holy religion as it is in the natural world. As our minds are constituted, we are obliged to *love* the beautiful and *pity* the homely. If nature were not beautiful we could not admire it; if religion were not beautiful we could neither desire nor love it. It is a great mistake,

therefore, that christians make, when they presume to pronounce adversely upon each others religion, because it is not the precise color or type of their own. Men do not look upon an object in nature with the same eyes. The drunkard sees in a "dollar" how much drink it will buy; the merchant, what per centum on goods it will bring him; the parent the pleasure it will secure to his child; the mechanic the amount of provisions and clothing it will gain for his family; the philanthropist the amount of comfort it will bring to the sorrowing, and the benevolent man the spiritual good it will bring to his fellow man. God in wisdom as well as in love and mercy has adapted grace to every conceivable temperament, disposition and taste; therefore it matters not how different these may be, in different individuals, still all have the same privileges and can attain unto the same glory. There is a great variety of palms, and there are as great, if not greater, varieties of types of true religion.

Another characteristic of the palm-tree is that it possesses midicinal properties. These are extracts from both the root and the fruit.

Thus it is with grace. It is the only panacea for all our spiritual diseases. Sin has vitiated our tastes, desires and motives and made us vile. A transformation of all these can only be effected by grace. It has the power to make us love the pure and the

good; to desire conformity unto the image of our blessed Redeemer, and inspire holy motives which never fail to prompt such activities as prove our true relation to the king and head of the church.

There is within our bosoms an immortal craving that the world cannot satisfy. Beautiful visions flit before us, apparently embodying great realities, and we pursue with all the energy of our natures and reach forth a hand to grasp and appropriate them only to be deceived, for they are only visions. We turn away in disgust only to be deceived again by another "fancy's airy flight;" and thus life is filled with deceptions, disappointments, delusions and sorrows. Still the desire for something real is not abated. The craving is insatiable. And not until the heart is turned away from the world and things of the world to God, (the source and dispenser of all good), can it find a satisfying portion. Christ only, can fill the soul; his grace only satisfy our cravings; the Holy Spirit only create us anew and lift us out of our vile surroundings and give a passport to the Throne. There are no deceptions in Christ; no disappointments in grace; no tears in "wisdom's ways," and no sorrow in her "paths." While reason is incompetent to comprehend the essence of the smallest thing, faith takes in God and eternity. While the natural man is unable to cope with the apparently smallest sin, grace is competent to cleanse from all sin. Grace heals all our diseases; cleanses from all

our iniquities; purges us from all dead works; creates spiritual strength and renews it day by day. It is competent to transform the debauchee into a gentleman, and the gentleman into a saint, and the saint into a "king and priest unto God." It is the "philosopher's stone" that the world needs to-day, and which alone can turn its dross into gold, and its downward current heavenward. It is the only antedote for sin's diseases. In all this "the righteous flourish like the palm-tree."

Another peculiarity of the palm-tree is, that it affords honey. One writer says, "honey is obtained from it only by pressure." If this be true what a striking picture it furnishes of the Christian. When in health he does not need the grace that sustains in sickness, and therefore, God does not give it to him; while death is yet remote, God withholds dying grace, simply because he does not need it; while filled with joy, God withholds the grace so necessary in sorrow. God gives his children grace just at the moment they need it, and not before. When, therefore, is grace the sweetest? When the Christian is under pressure. And the greater the pressure, the stronger and sweeter the grace. Hence, no affliction can be so great; no bereavement so terrible and no burden so heavy, but grace will enable us to bear them. "My grace shall be sufficient." "As thy day, thy strength shall be," are the assurances of the blessed Redeemer. How gloriously God has redeemed these promises in all

ages of the world. Abraham found them true when called upon to offer his beloved Isaac on a burning funeral pile. Isaiah demonstrated their truth when he chose rather to lay down his life a willing sacrifice than deny his Lord. All the martyrs, confessors and reformers, with the long catalogue of Old Testament worthies, whose names are household words throughout the ages, tried the grace and proved the promise true. And millions of other sufferers, unknown to fame, yet tried and true, have reveled in the same grace, always finding it sufficient. With the Psalmist they could say, "yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for Thou art with me; Thy rod and Thy staff, they comfort me." The greater the pressure, the sweeter the grace; the greater the need, the more abundant the supply. Grace accommodates itself to circumstances; while there is never a surplus, still there is no lack.

Not only is grace inexhaustible, but its healing properties never loose their virtue.

The points of resemblance between the growth of the righteous and that of the palm-tree are very striking, and, in understanding the latter, renders it impossible to mistake the former. It is important to know what the manifestations of grace are, not only that we may decide with considerable degree of certainty who are Christians, but that we may conclude, with absolute certainty, whether we, our-

selves, are or not. To be doubtful on this, the most important of all subjects, is criminal, especially so, since the Bible is full of illustrations which set the truth before in such a clear light, that it is impossible to mistake. It cannot be doubted but that the manifestations of sin are too numerous, not only in the church as a whole, but in many persons who would be considered Christians in the highest and grandest sense of that term. The cloven foot is visible too often, even in the best of men, and if in the best, how much more frequently in those less devoted and consecrated. It is not enough to have the "light," we must "let it shine" that others "shall take knowledge of us that we have been with Jesus and learned of him." Then let life, "though a morning cloud," be filled with the sweetest and the best fruits of righteousness.

CHAPTER IX.

LIFE CONDITIONED UPON DEATH.

The proposition that we now propose to consider is of vast moment to Christians, especially those who are curious to know the minute details of the Holy Spirit's methods in taking of the "things of Jesus and showing them unto us;" and also to the world as it stands related to Christ and the Church. The

joy of the one will be brightened by a clear understanding of it, and the responsibility of the other will certainly be felt, sufficiently at least, to make it pause and consider whither it is drifting.

The proposition is this, viz.: *All life is conditioned upon death; all living is conditioned upon dying. We live because we die; we don't die because we live.*

At the close of the sixth day of creation God took a survey of the works of his hands, and pronounced "all very good." The forests stood in majestic grandeur. The trees, with their seed, were created, they did not grow, for there was no law of death, and consequently could be no law of growth or development. The universe stood forth in peerless majesty perfect and complete, all wreathed with light and glory. No changes were visible; no trees blooming as the earnest of luscious fruit, because all things were created perfect and complete.

God's purpose to create man in his own image, and that he should of his own free will sin and by Christ be redeemed, accounts for his thoughts and purposes as expressed in the first chapter of Genesis: "Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb yielding seed and the fruit-trees yielding fruit after his kind, whose seed is in itself upon the earth; and it was so." The grass to be brought forth must be like the grass that was made, and the fruit-tree must bring forth fruit and seed like the fruit and seed that was created. The law of growth was determined upon

from all eternity; hence, the inference is the law of death was also determined upon, and now the inevitable conclusion is forced upon us that transgression was known and determined upon, as there could be no death without sin, for death is the penalty of sin.

It is reasonable to suppose that death was in the world before Adam sinned, but it was because of his sin. As Abraham was saved and crowned in heaven through the crucifixion of Christ, but it was before he was crucified. Therefore Christ's crucifixion was as certain as Abraham's glorification, and Adam's transgression was as certain as that death was in existence.

The common idea entertained largely by Christians is, that if Adam had not sinned all his posterity would have been saved, whereas the fact is, that if he had not sinned he had never had any posterity. Himself and Eve would have been the sole occupants of the world, for the simple reason there was no law of death apart from the idea of his sin, and consequently there was no growth, and could be none.

The fall of Adam means a vast deal more than plunging himself and his posterity into sin and making all subject to death, temporal and eternal. It was the introducing into both the moral and physical economies of God's universe the grandest law of nature, the law of death, apart from which there

could be no law of growth. Now, on all sides we behold development. The changing seasons bring with them not only new beauties and new pleasures, but also new and higher ideas of the unchanging God. And as man is conscious of the fact that he himself is mutable, he can appreciate the importance of clinging to the immutable Jehovah. Hence, all men have a *god* who they conceive to be better than themselves. So, when the Holy Spirit opens their eyes to behold the true, unchanging God, they rejoice and take courage.

The apostle Paul was doubtless the only apostle who had a clear conception of the precise functions of the human body, or "old nature," in matters of religion. All the other writers of the New Testament, wherever they touch upon the human body, invariably represent it as a clog to human development in grace. Well, they tell the truth; it is certainly a clog. We believe that the soul, when it leaves this sinful body, will make more rapid advances in knowledge and wisdom than it possibly can with its evil surroundings. But when Paul touches upon the human body he always extols it as something worthy of redemption. He represents it as a clog, like other writers, but just such a clog without which it would be impossible for us to grow in grace at all. Are not the wings of the noble eagle a clog or burden for the bird to carry? But it is just such a burden without which that eagle

could never soar to the skies. So the body, or carnal nature, is a burden, but just such a burden without which we could not be Christians at all. This is evident from the fact that mercy or favor can only be shown to the guilty. Adam, in a state of innocence, could not be the subject of grace. He was pure, spotless and holy. When by transgression he became guilty, then God could show him mercy. The law has nothing to do with the innocent, but with the guilty. If by regeneration we were rendered perfectly sinless, we could not be the subjects of grace any more than Adam in Eden was, or the glorified in heaven are. When the souls of believers are made perfect, grace, having accomplished its full work, ceases to exist. Hence, we are sinners as long as we live in this world, therefore can be subjects of grace. "He hath concluded all in unbelief that he might have mercy upon all." "No man liveth and sinneth not." This settles the question forever.

It was not the province of inspiration to make a man a mere automaton—a mere machine. We see the identity of each writer of both Testaments on everything they have written. If you hear a chapter from the New Testament read, there is no necessity that you should be told the name of the writer. You can tell this from the style and logic. Each has his own peculiarities and phrases. Inspiration never proposed to create brains nor give learn-

ing. Its function was to guide the pen, that a falsehood should not be written. Hence every word in the Bible is true. I believe not only in the plenary, but the verbal inspiration of the scriptures also. When historic facts were to be recorded, God inspired Matthew, Mark, Luke and John to do this work. They were perfectly competent—being eye-witnesses—and inspiration kept them from writing anything that was not true. Each, however, has written in his own peculiar style. But when the grand, fundamental principles of our holy religion were to be set forth for the benefit of all generations to come, God did not inspire Matthew, Mark, Luke or John to do it, for the simple reason that they were not competent to the task. They had neither the mental training nor the knowledge, which was indispensable to the performance of this duty. The Apostle Paul was chosen and inspired for this most important work. Had God inspired Matthew to write the epistle to the Romans he would have had no conception of what he was doing; he would have been a mere machine in the hands of Inspiration. Paul was born for this particular work. Nor was it accidental that he was brought up at the feet of that great Jewish doctor of the law, Gamaliel. For under such tuition only, could he obtain the precise mental drilling necessary to prepare him for his work. Neither was it accidental that he became acquainted with all Greek poetry; this was

necessary also as a preparation for his work. Nor was it accidental that he possessed that force of will, indomitable perseverance, and brave determination, that astounded the age in which he lived, as well as all succeeding ones. What sort of an Apostle to the Gentiles would he have been had he been otherwise endowed?

Then, apart from his inspiration, Paul was one of the grandest men that ever breathed the breath of life. It would scarcely be more than strict truth to say that he was the grandest man that ever lived, with the single exception of Moses. Paul bears a similar relation to the spiritual economy of the church that Moses bore to the legal. Both were born, preserved and endowed for their particular work. As before said, Paul was the only one of the Apostles who had a clear conception of the functions of the human body; the part it plays in matters of religion. It was Paul who said, "but though our outward man perish, the inward man is renewed day by day." There is a peculiar combination of Greek particles translated "but though;" the literal translation of them is "but," "if," "and." His idea evidently is that as the "flesh" or "old nature" dies, the "spirit" or "new nature" grows. In other words, he conditions the growth of the "new man" upon the dying of the "old." This is not only a spiritual law, but it is a universal law of nature and testified to by human observation.

What is true in nature, must be true in grace, because the God of nature is the God of grace and he cannot contradict himself. Grace does not cross nature at a single point. It crosses sin at every angle, but sin is not nature; it is an innovation, an introduction into nature. Paul's idea is, that apart from transgression, or the introduction of sin into the world, there could have been no growth because there could have been no death. Apart from the *idea* of death the *idea* of growth could never have existed. In short, no death, no growth.

We now recur to our proposition, viz: All life is conditioned upon death; all living is conditioned upon dying. This must be true in *both* nature and grace, or it cannot be true in either.

First, it is true in nature, that all life is conditioned upon death? Take a sound grain of corn and plant it in the earth; as long as it remains sound it cannot germinate. It must undergo a chemical process, a process of decay; when it has passed into a certain stage of death a new life appears and you see the germ, then the stalk, then the ear, then the full corn in the ear. The fields of corn waving in the breeze—of what are they the fruit? Dying grains. Had the grain not died, the stalk and the full corn in the ear could not have grown. So, too, the beautiful flower gardens, exhaling their sweetest perfumes, are the result of dy-

ing flower seeds. The majestic forests are the fruitage of dying acorns. Observation teaches clearly that in inanimate nature all life is conditioned upon death—all living is conditioned upon dying.

What is true in inanimate nature must be true in the animate world. One illustration will suffice for all on this particular part of the subject. How does the child grow to manhood? By dying. We live because we die, we do not die, because we live.

Physiologists tell us, and I know they tell the truth, that in the new-born babe the circulation is very rapid, one hundred and fifty, and in some, more pulsations per minute. It is not accidental that the Bible records the fact that "the life is in the blood." We never could have located life; we never could have been certain whether it was in the brain, blood, heart or nerves. Hence the Bible tells us: God, in infinite wisdom, has arranged that just so soon as its own lungs begin to burn the oxygen of the atmosphere, the circulation begins to retard or die. (Before birth the circulation obeyed the same law). Just in proportion as the circulation dies the child grows. The circulation dies imperceptibly day by day, and the child grows imperceptibly day by day. Month by month you can detect the dying of the circulation. The number of pulsations per minute are fewer, so month by month you perceive that the child is growing. Thus the process of dying goes on, and in the same ratio the child grows. But

when the circulation has died till the pulsations are only one hundred and twenty per minute suppose, something foreign to its constitution is taken into its system, malaria for example, then the circulation ceases dying and the child stops growing. The blood, which is the life, begins to fight the foreign element and uses its best endeavors to expel it. It boils into a fever and continues boiling for a week or month, perhaps, until the foreign substance is expelled; then it drops down to its normal condition again, or in other words, to the precise point where it was interrupted, to the one hundred and twenty pulsations per minute, and then begins dying again, and the child begins to grow again. Thus the process goes on, dying and growing until the pulsations are reduced to only seventy-five or eighty per minute, Then God stops the dying of the circulation, and the man has gotten his full stature. He cannot grow any more.

God has limited man's life to "three score years and ten." Before he attains this age, however, a second dying of the circulation begins. This is the dying of consumption, the opposite of that which caused development or growth. The grain of corn is placed in the earth and given the moisture, salts of the earth and caloric, all of which are favorable to the production of a new life. Throw that same grain into the fire, it dies also, but this second dying is the death of consumption. As the circula-

tion begins to die the second time, the man begins to weaken; his strength begins to fail; and as the circulation becomes slower he becomes correspondingly weaker; his limbs become palsied; his whole frame trembles, and after a while he is unable to walk, then he drops into the grave. It may be that he was perfectly free from disease. The common idea is that he died from old age. This, however, is a very great mistake. Any one, who has the slightest acquaintance with anatomy, knows that old age never killed any one. It did not kill Methuselah, and he died at the age of nine hundred and sixty nine. They are obliged to know that the supply in the human frame is precisely equal to the waste. If this be true, some will ask, why do men ever die at all? The answer comes from God: "It is appointed unto men once to die." But for this divine appointment they would live on, under favorable circumstances, in full vigor until the end of time. In other words we would never die from old age. It is very evident now, from observation, that all growth in nature is conditioned upon death, that all living is conditioned upon dying. This being true in nature, it must also be true in grace, because the God of nature is also the God of grace. If true in the one it must be true in the other, for truth cannot clash with truth. It must be true then that the growth of the "new man" is conditioned upon the dying of the "old."

The Christian is in possession of two natures, the "old" and the "new." When the "new nature" is implanted within him, the "old nature" is neither destroyed nor weakened any more than the meal is leavened the moment the leaven is "hid" in it. The growth of the "new" nature is in the precise ratio of the dying of the "old." This is all easily understood when we take into consideration the work grace accomplishes. Remember that each grace of the Spirit has its opposite in our "old" nature, and works on its opposite only. There had never been such a grace of the Spirit as faith, if we did not have unbelief by nature, and if unbelief was taken out of us or destroyed when faith is implanted; in other words, if we cease to be unbelievers, then faith would have nothing to do. But unbelief remains untouched still, and faith goes to work on it, and each exercise of faith, in believing a promise or obeying a command, weakens the unbelief, and just in proportion as it weakens faith strengthens, and in proportion as it dies faith grows. There had never been such a grace of the Spirit as "love" to God, if we did not have hatred of holiness by nature; nor such a grace as humility, if we did not have pride of heart by nature; nor benevolence, if we were not avaricious by nature. Each "grace" you perceive has its own special work to do, and the exercise of either particular "grace" weakens only its opposite, and consequently it alone is

strengthened. That the necessity for grace shall become more apparent and its work more clearly understood, I shall notice each "grace" separately in relation to its opposite, and show how they work and the results of their working. Remember the Christian has two natures, the "old" and the "new." The "new" grows at the expense of the "old." A single illustration will show the method.

Take a ball of cord. One end of the cord is in the center of the ball, the other is on the outside; take this last end and begin to wind a second ball. You observe that the second ball gains size at the expense of the size of the first. The longer you wind the larger the second becomes, and the first gets proportionately smaller; finally the first ball ceases to exist, then the second can become no larger. This illustration, however, teaches only the relative increase of the one ball to the diminution of the other. We are not to understand that the new nature takes on the old, and grows and strengthens thereby.

First, faith is hid by the Holy Spirit in our measure of unbelief, as was seen in a preceding chapter. It is its nature to work. God gives a promise, faith lays hold of it, (i. e.) believes in it, and thus exercising itself in the promise, weakens unbelief, and as unbelief weakens faith strengthens. Suppose you do not believe the promise, can your faith strengthen? And can your unbelief weaken?

It is only by the exercise of faith in the promise that your unbelief can be dwarfed. Then there is another promise given; believe it and your unbelief will diminish, and in the same proportion will your faith grow. As the "outward" man, unbelief, perishes, the "inward" man, "faith" is renewed, or increased. We see why it is then, that God has made such a multitude of promises. It is by believing them we may destroy unbelief. Then the commands: it is believing that God has a right to command, and, therefore, obeying them, that unbelief is weakened, and as it weakens faith strengthens. Suppose you refuse obedience. Can your faith strengthen? By believing the promises, obeying the commands, heeding the exhortations and entreaties unbelief is diminished, weakened, dwarfed and faith increased in the same ratio. When, however, all our unbelief is destroyed, faith has attained its full growth, and just as soon as the last vestige of unbelief is destroyed, that moment faith's work is fully accomplished, and it, too, ceases to exist. It gives place to vision. Hence, christians have unbelief in them as long as they live, and they are conscious of the fact. This consciousness often causes serious doubts as to whether they are believers at all, or not. They appreciate their unbelief because it is something visible, or in other words, is a thing of consciousness, while their faith is hid from their consciousness, except at times, as truly as the leaven

in the meal. As long as there is unbelief in us faith works, but when it is entirely destroyed faith ceases to exist as a grace. There is no more work for it to do, hence it gives place to vision. Glorified believers do not exercise the grace of faith in Heaven. They believe God but it is like the child believing its mother. Grace never gets out of this world. There is no need of it in heaven, because there is no sin there. God wont let it go into hell, because hell's population despised it here. Thus we see where faith's work is, as well as what it is and the conditions of its growth. No other grace can do its work. The exercise of all the other graces does not affect unbelief an iota. Faith is the particular grace for which Abraham was so noted. The trial of it in the command to offer up Isaac on a burning funeral pile, and his purposed obedience, proves it to be omnipotent, that it is from God and is of God. Imagination cannot conceive of a severer test, yet how grandly it achieved its victory. If history had chronicled no other example, this one alone would be amply sufficient to stop the mouths of gain-sayers, and prove to the world that christianity is from heaven and proposes to crown the christian there.

"Love" to God, as a grace, is put in the measure of our "hatred of holiness." If "hatred of holiness" was taken out of us when "love" is put in us it would have nothing to do, but it remains and nothing but the exercise of love can dwarf it. And

in proportion as it is exercised, hatred of holiness weakens and love strengthens. Its growth is conditioned, like "Faith," on the death of its opposite. The Lord, our Redeemer, is pictured in the Bible, in a most beautiful character. As our minds are constituted we are obliged to love the beautiful; we cannot help it. Therefore, the more our attention is fixed upon Christ as our Savior, the more beauty we see in him, and "that we should desire him" the more we love him. And as the manifestations of his so great love begin to unfold, and finally culminate in his great sufferings and death, that we may be eternally glorified and crowned in heaven, our "hatred of holiness" necessarily weakens, and in the same proportion does our love, as a "grace," strengthen. For this reason, we are urged so earnestly and frequently, in the scriptures, "to look unto Jesus." "Behold the Lamb of God." "Come unto Me." Beauty will fascinate, and the more beautiful the object, the more certain will the affections reach out after it.

"Humility," as a "grace," is precisely the opposite of our natural "pride of heart," and its exercise, alone, is the antidote for this terrible disease. As the one dies, the other grows. Perhaps, this is the most trying of all the graces of the spirit to exercise, except the grace of "benevolence." Still it is divine, and will work its perfect work in the end. There are many towering Christians in "faith" whose con-

duct proves them to be as proud as Lucifer, as they manifest contempt for their fellows who, perchance, walk in an humbler sphere. But while considering this characteristic of Jesus, who though he was rich became poor, and who though himself the "glory of heaven," laid it all aside in order to prepare a redemption commensurate with the sinner's necessities awakes similar feelings, and self-importance contrasts so unfavorably with Christ's humility that pride of heart is cut and *humility*, as a grace, grows.

"Benevolence finds its opposite in our natural avariciousness. Its exercise is needful to dwarf and destroy this propensity; and as it dies, benevolence grows. The reason why God requires of us to give our dimes and dollars for the evangelization of the heathen is not because he could not bring them to a knowledge of the truth without our assistance, but because he wishes to do us good. Avarice is a sin of hideous mien, and can never enter heaven, and it will not "down at our bidding;" hence God must prepare a perfect antidote for it: and "benevolence" is the grace he has prepared. The exercise of this grace will dwarf and destroy the last vestige of the sin of avarice within you; but he who refuses to exercise this grace by contributing for the good of others abroad, his sin receives no check and will grow until it becomes so strong that it will command him not to do good to those at home.

Christ lived and worked for the good of all generations to come, and he would have us recognize in every man a brother, whether under our own roof or on the other side of the world. The gospel teaches us to do good unto all, as God giveth opportunity; for in blessing others we receive a double blessing. Thus each grace of the spirit grows and strengthens, as its opposite, which is ours by nature, weakens, dwarfs and dies. "Because of the perishing of the "outward man," the "inward man" is strengthed day by day."

The question now arises by what means other than the presence and exercise of the graces of the spirit can the carnal nature be subdued. The answer is, there is no other known to man or divine revelation. No other power does God propose to put forth to this end. The importance therefore of obeying the command "seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness" cannot be too earnestly urged nor too greatly appreciated. The carnal nature yields to no power but grace, and if grace be wanting it will grow as long as the man lives. Philosophy which has achieved such wonderful results in its own sphere is impotent to change or weaken it. Science may roam the fields of space and both please and instruct by its truthful voice, or it may stroll among the stars of heaven and measure with wonderful accuracy the distance to the remotest planets or note a thousand years to come the eclipse of sun

and moon; still its efforts to reform or change the carnal nature, would be vain and worse than vain. And should it boast of its achievements, the carnal nature would make it blush for shame at the mere recital of a few of its own exploits. Nothing but grace can meet it successfully, and the hope is vain built on anything else. Grace, and nothing but grace, can heal all our spiritual diseases.

A sick man may have a sovereign remedy by his bedside and he may know that it is a specific for his disease, but if he refuses to take it, it cannot cure him. So it is not enough that the sinner should hear of the wonderful cures effected by grace; this does not reach his disease. Nor is it enough that he should be fully persuaded in his own mind that he ought to take it; there is no virtue in this. He must accept it as God's free gift and then circumstance it favorably for working. Then he lives a new life; feasts upon the real manna and drinks of that spiritual fountain which becomes a "well of water springing up within him to life everlasting, eternal life." Then the "light" within him shines, and so shines that others take knowledge. A city set upon a hill is visible to all around. So the presence and power of grace within cannot be long concealed. It bursts forth as silently, though as astoundingly, upon the vision of the ungodly as the Spring awakes into enchantment and beauty from winter's dreariness—

the world in which we live. There is no arguing against a holy life. Its testimony to the power of grace is unquestionable. It marks the decay of the "old nature" in its own increasing strength and growth.

But apart from the influence it exerts on others by its peculiar manifestations, it acts no less upon the tastes, conscience and habits of the individual himself. It begins a purifying process as soon as the man is "created anew in Christ Jesus," and revolutionizes his entire being. But the process is gradual. The tastes change, it is true, but gradually and slowly, and all evil habits, though not changed at once, are destroyed in the end. Thus grace comes off conqueror, and more than conqueror, because it crowns each soldier a king forever.

The proposition is now demonstrated. The Apostle Paul was right when he said, in effect, that the "new" nature strengthens at the expense of the "old." "Though the outward" man perish, the "inward" man is renewed day by day.

Grace is adapted to sinners as they are, not as they ought to be; and in this is manifested the infinite wisdom and love of God, because he so arranged that Christian growth is in accord with precisely the same law as natural growth. Hence, natural growth, a thing of experience and observation, is not only a fact, in itself considered, but it is at the same time an illustration of spiritual development.

It is through the medium of nature that we do understand; we get a comparative idea of spiritual things which are incomprehensible to our finite understanding. In other words, we can comprehend the likeness, though we cannot understand the thing. For this reason, God does not define grace; he tells us what it is like. Grace is like "leaven in the meal;" "like a grain of mustard seed;" "like treasure hid in a field;" "like a net cast into the sea which gathereth every kind;" "like a merchant man seeking goodly pearls." Had God told us what grace is, we could not have understood Him, for the reason that our knowledge is all relative; but when he tells us what it is like, we have no difficulty in understanding the likeness, and thereby gain a comparative idea of the thing.

It is for this reason, I apprehend, that nature is called the first book of God's revelation to man. Whether it be true or not, this is true, more than a glimpse of the spiritual kingdom is seen in its face, even enough to inspire in the serious soul an earnest desire to rise "from this world of nature up to nature's God."

And now the proposition, and Paul's testimony to its truth: "All life is conditioned upon death, and all living is conditioned upon dying; we live because we die, we do not die because we live."

Paul testifies, "I die daily." "But though our outward man perish, the inward man is strengthened day by day."

CHAPTER X.

ALL PROGRESS CONDITIONED UPON FORGETTING.

The human mind is possessed of wonderful powers, and its peculiar constitution manifests the infinite wisdom of God, its framer. Its faculties have furnished themes for philosophy, poetry and song in all ages of the world. The wisest cannot fully understand it, and yet the weakest comprehend to some degree. In all its vast range, from the calm deductions of reason, to the most fanciful and loftiest flights of imagination, its divinity is appreciable. Its ability to "forget" a thing is no less wonderful than its powers to comprehend a truth. This being true, and so important a truth, it is a remarkable fact that no mental philosopher has ever dignified this ability with the name "faculty." It is certainly the safety-valve of the mind, and is as important as reason itself. All progress in every department of life is conditioned upon it. The social, civil, ecclesiastical and political world would be a perfect blank without it, and the mechanic arts and agriculture would forever have stood still. Yet, no special notice, or at least no prominent place, has ever been assigned it by writers on mental philosophy of whom I have any knowledge. Yet, it is as universally true in its working as it is important in its results.

It is visible not only in the kingdom of nature, but also in the kingdom of grace.

The Apostle Paul had a clear conception of its importance in the methods of grace, as enunciated in his famous declaration contained in his letter to the Phillipians: "Forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." In this he states concisely both the logical and theological idea of growth or advancement.

It is important, however, carefully to distinguish between "forgetting" and "eradicating." As the mind is constituted it is impossible for an idea, after it has been impressed upon the mind, ever to be erased, though it may be forgotten. There are thousands of impressions on your memory that you have not thought of for years, and yet a little circumstance may bring some of them vividly before your mind's eye some time in the future. They are forgotten, but not erased. If impressions made upon the mind were not permanent, then there could be no such thing as certain knowledge, for the simple reason that the impression which starts a line of thought might be erased before the line matures; consequently there could be no certain, stable ground upon which to base a conclusion. There could be no possible way whereby the logical steps could be re-traced so as to determine with absolute certainty

that a mistake might not have been made in the process of reasoning. If impressions stamped upon the memory were not capable of being "forgotten," or if they were erasable, in either event, like consequences would naturally result. There could be no progress. So then, the truth of the proposition, that "all progress is conditioned on forgetting," being confirmed, both by observation and experience, is unquestionable. An illustration will best suffice to bring the truth within the limits of the comprehension of all.

How does the man become a mathematician? It is evident that he does not become so by physical growth; nor by applying his powers of mind on some other science or subject. First, he learns that two and two make four. The mind being a unit, it can't have but one idea under consideration, at one and the same time; and as long as he keeps the process of reasoning before his mind, and the conclusion that "four" is the product of two and two, he cannot advance a single step in the science. He must forget both in order to learn that two and three make five.

A little insight into the peculiar constitution of our mental being, and the laws that control all its activities, will prove our proposition conclusively. Compare the mind to a chest of drawers. Though a unit, it has separate and distinct faculties. Label one drawer "Reason;" another "Memory," and

another "Judgment." Then put this proposition before it: The "three angles of a tri-angle are equal to two right angles." The diagram is placed on the black-board. The drawer, "Reason," comes out and it begins to demonstrate the proposition to see whether it is true or false. Step by step the demonstration is gone through with, as the reason is about reaching the conslusion; the drawers of judgment and memory both come out, and judgment ment takes the conclusion and stamps it upon memory, and all three of the drawers close again. The entire process of demonstration, together with the conclusion, is now forgotten, and the mind is ready to wrestle with another proposition. You observe, however, that the sponge must be applied and the diagram taken from the board, or from the mind, before another proposition can be entertained. As long as the tri-angle is kept before the mind, together with the process of reasoning, it is impossible to learn anything more; it is impossible for it to demonstrate the proposition; "two parallell lines will run ad infinitum and never meet." The first must be forgotten in order to learn, or demonstrate, the last, and determine the truth or falsehood of the same, and the "judgment" and "memory" as well as the "reason" perform precisely the same functions in the second proposition as in the first, and it is thus that the science of geometry is learned and understood.

Another peculiarity of the mind is, the same thing has never to be learned over again. The process of reasoning may pass from memory so completely that you may not be able to recall it, but the conclusion never, for the reason that memory is its special guardian, and an idea stamped upon it can never be erased. Thus forgetting and learning is the order of advancement in mathematics. The same process is followed in all sciences, and the child grows up into manhood and into scholarship.

The farmer who keeps before his mind the precise methods pursued last year, can make no improvement or advance this year. There is a necessity that he should forget in order to advance in his calling.

The mechanic who keeps in mind the mechanism of a machine of his own construction, can make no improvement on it. He must forget in order to improve. The same is true in every department of life. "Forgetting the things behind," is the condition to "reaching after those before." Without this peculiar ability the architect would be as incapable of varying his designs as the bird is to change the shape and size of its nest. The bird has no ability to improve and make more comfortable its nest, because it is wanting in ability to "forget."

The wonderful wisdom and goodness of God is, therefore, seen as clearly in this peculiar ability of the mind as in the constitution of the faculties themselves.

The "memory" being an eternal, or rather, an everlasting faculty, which is not only capable of but actually does retain forever, all impressions made upon it, thus obviating the necessity of learning the same truth twice; God has so arranged that whenever a truth once learned is needed, that moment memory produces it, and it seldom flashes it upon the mind unless it is needed either for profit or pleasure. And in order that memory should produce the particular truth needed at the proper time, God has established an invisible connection between it and and outward visible circumstances, which has never been satisfactorily explained and perhaps never will be, but the *fact* is understood and appeciated, which fact is that circumstances compel memory to perform its office. Memory has no option in the matter any more than the calendar of the clock, which is moved and controlled by the same power which points the hour of the day; it is obliged to designate the month and the day of the month. The clock and calendar are two sets of machinery, constructed for different purposes, the one to designate the hour of the day; the other the month and day of the month; still both are moved by the same power, and while the mechanical connection between them is perfect, the one cannot move without moving the other. Thus, "memory," in a great degree, is under the control of circumstances, and by some peculiar association of ideas, is compelled to perform its legitimate func-

tions. An illustration of this fact may serve to make it clearer to the comprehension of some.

A party consisting of twenty persons, more or less, makes a tour of the mountains during the heat of summer. About noon they pass through a long, dry, hot, dusty lane. As they emerge into the forest they are refreshed by the cooling shade. Presently, they come upon a beautiful, moss-covered mound; at its base a bubbling spring sends forth a clear, sparkling rivulet; the foliage of the trees is thick; the shade dense; the birds are chanting their sweetest melodies among the boughs, and some one of the party suggests a halt for the purpose of taking lunch. An hour is spent most pleasantly, anecdotes are in order and greatly enjoyed. "Memory" is busy each moment receiving impressions, and soon the party moves on. As new scenes open to view, the place, the moss-covered mound, the spring and all the circumstances of the hour of luncheon is forgotten. The tour is completed and the party separate and each goes to his own home. Ten, twenty, perhaps fifty years pass away. Possibly all the party except yourself are in their graves. All these years memory has kept its sacred charge. You have never recalled the "hour at the spring." But at the same season of the year and about the same hour of the day, you again, though all alone, pass through the same lane, enter the same forest, come upon the same moss-covered mound, bubbling spring,

clear stream; the same songs of birds are heard, and, unsolicited, out comes "memory" and presents the scenes of fifty years ago as vividly and as truly as if it had only been yesterday. The anecdotes and countenances of each are remembered and you live over again that hour with pleasure as great, if not greater, than when the living party communed together on that spot fifty years before. Thus, similar or like circumstances are potent to make "memory" perform its office. But all these years the facts of that hour were forgotten, but not erased, and because forgotten you have enjoyed other companionships and other scenes.

Oftentimes, however, circumstances touch the spring of "memory" when it is impossible to discover the remotest connection between the circumstances and the thing that "memory" brings vividly before the mind. There must, however, be a connection if it is not seen or understood,

Then, again, there are certain facts that memory is not expected to produce when needed; such as dates and interesting occurrences, marriages and deaths, and many other things of this class. All these can be dotted down in a memorandum book, and when needed can be easily found. But there are men who make a memorandum book of their memory. They can tell the days of the week and month it rained last year, the date of each interesting occurrence in Church and State for the last ten

years. Observation proves that such men are seldom fit for anything else. Their minds are in an abnormal condition, and they are but a short distance removed from lunacy.

Again, it matters not how pleasing an event or scene may be, if kept constantly before the mind's eye it will soon become painful; and if too long protracted, will dethrone reason; and but for its wonderful ability to forget, not only could there be no progress made in any department of life, but the human family would soon become imbecile. It is contrary to its very constitution to consider any one subject beyond a certain limited time. This is why certain men of inventive genius become mentally unbalanced. They become so absorbed with the one idea that it is impossible to throw it off the mind and forget it; hence, dethronement of reason is the legitimate result. The more interesting the subject, the greater the danger.

Perhaps the subject of religion causes more insanity than any other one theme. The mind becomes so absorbed because of the extreme interest of the subject that it is impossible to cast it off a sufficient length of time to give undivided consideration to any other subject.

On this theme, as on any other, however, the insanity is only developed; is manifested. Its seeds were in the mind before.

A perfectly healthy mind positively refuses to pro-

tract thought on any subject beyond reasonable time; nor can it be compelled to do so. Hence, the ability to "forget," as said before, is the safety-valve of the mind, and on it all progress is conditioned.

The Apostle Paul clearly teaches this truth, insofar as the spiritual growth or development is concerned. The "reaching forward to those things which are before," he conditions on "forgetting those things which are behind." And in this he also teaches another equally important truth, viz: That all things worthy of supreme regard are before us. Christ and the Holy Spirit, the means of grace and the graces of the Spirit, are represented as being "before" us, as well as in us and about us, and it is our business as well as our privilege to "reach" after them.

The Holy Spirit comes to put the result of Christ's work before us as certainly as to take of the things of Christ and show them unto us; but we must reach for them, they do not reach for us. Nevertheless, it is an amazing truth that "our bodies are his temples in which he delights to dwell."

The world is totally ignorant of the methods of grace, as well as of the importance of grace itself. Semi-Christians are equally so; hence the carelessness and indifference so apparent in their conduct towards the obligations of religion. In the Christian calling, all activity is the result of the working

of grace, and where there is no activity it is evident that grace is wanting.

The Apostles, filled with the Holy Spirit, "forgot" their own ease, pleasure and worldly gain, braved the fury of opposition, bore unmurmuringly the curses of the fanatical, the scoffs of the rabble, the mockery of the ignorant, and borne along by the holier impulses of righteousness, confounded philosophy, destroyed superstition, made kings tremble with their divine logic, revolutionized kingdoms, and all without sword or artillery.

Grand results followed such consecration to the service of God. The Church will chant pæans to their praise while time exists, and then eternity will take up the anthem and waft it through its ceaseless cycles.

The martyrs, "forgetting" the things behind, gave up all for the glory of God, and rejoiced that they "were counted worthy to suffer" and die in so glorious a cause. Their testimony to gospel truth has staggered infidelity, and notwithstanding the various arts and devices of Satan to prove it false, it stands grandly to-day, and will, in all time to come, unimpeached and unimpeachable.

The reformers, "forgetting" the things behind, devoted themselves, with all their powers, to the overthrow of error, fanaticism and idolatry, and thus reaching after the things before, viz.: the worship of the living and the true God, in all the simplicity

and purity of the gospel—accomplished the most wonderful revolution known to the world's history, and bequeathed to generations yet unborn, the richest inheritance known to grace and to God.

And the Church, "forgetting" the things behind, the fascinations, the pleasures and the riches of the world, has ever, is now, and will continue, to reach forward after the glory of God and the salvation of man. This is her mission, and from past successes, it is easy to divine the future. Aye, the promise is, "all peoples and kingdoms and tongues under the whole heaven shall be embraced in her redeemed fold, and Christ, her king and head, shall reign king of nations, as he now reigns king of saints."

What we have found to be true in the vocations of life, as far as the ability of the mind to "forget" a thing is involved, is pre-eminently true in the religious or spiritual sphere. All development in the divine life, all growth in grace is conditioned upon the same ability. This is not strange at all, since God has adapted grace to the mind, and not the mind to grace. It is very evident that grace is adapted to us as we are, not as we ought to be, nor as we once were.

Before Adam sinned, his reason was in harmony with the divine mind; transgression was the cause of its being turned in the opposite direction. Hence, God, in his infinite wisdom, adapted grace to sinners, and sinners only can be its beneficiaries.

The Bible is silent as regards the atonement of

Christ extending to the confirmation of angels in holiness as some profess to believe.

The questions of paramount importance to sinners are, by what means can God be just and still justify them? Then, after becoming the recipients of grace, by what means can they grow in grace as commanded? The answer to the first question is simple and easily understood. "Christ was made sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." To the second question, the true and universal answer of both the church and Bible is, the "wise and prayerful use of all the means of grace." But, in using these means, the same laws of mind are recognized as are visible and appreciable in growth or progress in any department of life. The ability of the mind to "forget" is just as essential to growth in grace as it is to advancement in science or mechanics.

It is very evident that the Christian is not only a "new creature," but that the "new creature" grows and develops. The command is "grow in grace." The "new creature" consists of all the graces of the spirit. These graces are all found together, or they are not found at all. They are never separate. They are often found in different degrees of development, however, in the same individual.

The question now arises, how do they develop?

The answer is by the possessor forgetting those things which are behind. To illustrate: love to God as a grace is scarcely appreciable by the individual when first born into the kingdom. The degree of it, however, is that precisely suited to him yesterday, but it is not what he needs to-day. He must "forget" yesterday's degree of it in order to have a greater degree to-day. Should he keep in remembrance past degrees of it and the precise emotions it generated the impossibility of its growing, or manifesting still deeper emotions, becomes very apparent. The assurance is, "as thy day, thy strength shall be." In other words, the grace of yesterday is not your support to-day. That is in the past, and as far as your spirituality is concerned, is as dead as is the past. And as in the economy of God there is no grace for to-morrow, but for the present only, the individual who considers past experiences, sufficient, and ceases to strive for other, and greater, carries the evidence in his own bosom that his hope is vain.

Faith, another grace of the spirit, grows precisely in the same way. The degree of it yesterday was precisely suited to yesterday's needs, but is not worth anything to you to-day. Hence in order to grow, its degree of yesterday must be forgotten, that you may have a greater degree of it to-day. To-day's needs are greater than yes-

terday's; therefore, a greater degree of faith is required. And God, in mercy, has ordained that as is the need, so shall the grace be. It is sad, very sad indeed, to see an immortal man living a stranger to grace; approaching nearer and still nearer the grave, as day by day flies by, and each successive one increasing his need and demanding more and stronger degrees of it, to prepare him to live the short remainder of life aright, and for entering upon eternity with joy. Faith, as well as all the other graces of the spirit, is a necessity for entering into eternal life; and God's promise is that, under all circumstances, "it shall be sufficient." Therefore, believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved.

Repentance, humility, benevolence and all other graces, grow in the same way. It is only by "forgetting" the degree of each yesterday, that the increased supply demanded by the needs of today, can possibly be secured.

What is true, in order to advancement in the different callings of life, and also in religion, as regards growth or development in grace, is true in all church work. The Christian should never consider that he has done anything while there remains so much to be done; because, while meditating upon, and remembering past efforts and past successes, present duty is of necessity neglected. They should bear in mind that in using their best

endeavors in the past, for the glory of God and the salvation of men, they only have done their duty, and yesterday's duties nobly performed will not atone for the neglect of to-day's. Men "cannot" perform works of supererogation, and God "will" not.

Perhaps the greatest barrier to the evangelization of the world the church meets is in her own lack of faith, which necessarily weakens christian endeavor. Open and avowed infidelity is no obstacle. Opposition is a help rather than a hindrance. The church has never grown faster and stronger than when most desperately opposed. The cause of comparatively slow progress is not to be found without but within her pale. How important, then, that faith should be strengthened by every available means within our reach, and that each one called with a divine calling to an high and immortal destiny, should loosen his grasp upon the things that perish, in order to fix his affections upon the glorious realities of the eternal world. That the hand may never be idle, God has ordained a thousand ways in which it can be profitably employed for his gloryand the creature's good; and in all the working God requires, he that serves receives all the benefit, and God all the glory. Why then should our hands hang idly by our side? Why consider duty a burden instead of a privilege and a pleasure? Why loiter along the road that leads from "nature up to nature's God

when we hold the power in our own hands to increase the reward beyond computation at its termination? Why mourn and lament over failures so often when the promise is not to the "successful," but to the "faithful?" "Because thou hast been 'faithful' over a few things I will make thee ruler over many things." Let the church flame with holy zeal, which zeal shall be "according to knowledge," and we can say to the world your Messiah has come. No creature-power could retard her progress; but onward and upward, pushing her own resistless course, would call the sinking millions to follow after as she "allures to brighter worlds and leads the way."

The world will not be brought to the knowledge of the truth as it is in Jesus until the church becomes more "forgetful" of the things which are behind and proves beyond the possibility of questioning, that she is sustained and controlled by a power not of earth to which the world is a stranger. We know not when, but the promise is sure; "the heathen shall be Christ's inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the world his possession." Already the light has dawned upon every land; the Bible is no longer manacled, but the doors of all nations are thrown wide open and it is invited in. Say what you will, but present indications point with no uncertain finger to the time, not in the very remote future, when loud hallelujahs will roll over every part of the habitable globe, and ascriptions of praise, and power, and do-

minion, and glory will be given to *Him* who hath redeemed us with his most precious blood and hath gloriously elevated us to the offices of kings and priests unto God. The Church is rapidly "forgetting the things which are behind" and with increasing earnestness "reaching after those things which are before;" and with re-doubled energy is "pressing toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." May the blessed Redeemer soon "see of the travail of his soul and be satisfied."

CHAPTER XI.

CONFLICT BETWEEN THE FAITH OF THE HEAD AND FAITH OF THE HEART.

The Bible records many striking illustrations of the conflict between the intellectual conviction of what is duty and the opposition of the heart or desire to doing it. This is the common experience of men in every day life. They may be thoroughly convinced that a certain enterprise ought to succeed, that its success would be for the greatest good to the greatest number; yet, because it would interfere with their individual plans or militate against their pecuniary interest they desire to see it fail; and as the "heart" is the dominant power it invariably controls the "head," and they set about in real earnest to defeat the enterprise. It is only when the intellectual conviction runs in the same groove with our heart or desire that we do what we believe to be

right. To illustrate: the thief is intellectually convinced that it is wrong to steal, but, his desire being on the side of theft, he steals. The profane swearer is convinced that it is wrong to swear, yet he does it for the same reason. Nearly all the crimes committed against law and order are committed under protest of the convictions of the head. If men would only "do" what they *know* or even believe to be right, this world would be a perfect Elysium to live in. But the "heart" being the dominant power it controls the "head" and men rush on in the ways of transgression, with precious little regard for the rights and feelings of their fellow-men, and oft-times with supreme contempt for the laws of the land. This is one reason why the land is filled with crime; the penitentiaries, jails and work-houses with criminals; and the torrents of sorrow, grief and distress swell as the population increases.

The heart is wrong and nothing but the grace of God can ever right it, and when this is effected, then, and not till then, will law be universally respected, crime cease and remorse and grief flee the abodes of the wretched. The Apostle Paul writing to the church at Rome states the truth in a laconic way: "With the *heart* man believeth unto righteousness," or unto right-doing. We propose to use Naaman as an illustration of this exceedingly important truth.

Naaman was not only a real but a representative character, and according to the clear declaration of inspiration, he was one of earth's nobility; he was a grand man. God always selects the very best and most honorable of their class to be representative men. The Bible states facts concerning him that prove conclusively that not only his fellow-men had the utmost confidence in his integrity and large appreciation of his noble character, but the king himself was proud of him and honored him with the highest position within his realm. He was "Captain of the host of the King of Syria," (i. e.) he was generalissimo of all the Syrian forces. He was also "a great man with his master," in other words, he was the king's confidential adviser. No great conquest was planned without consulting Naaman, and the inference is that, if his judgment did not agree with the king's, the king would yield very graciously. He was also an "honorable man." There was nothing little, contracted nor mean about Naaman; he was an honorable man. He was not tricky; his noble soul scorned to sink so low. He never concealed his true purpose and desire under the pretext of benefiting the people. He was open, perfectly transparent in all his motives, purposes and activities, for he was "an honorable man." "By him the Lord," himself, "had given deliverance unto Syria." God recognized the greatness of his soul and honesty of aim and used him as an honored in-

strument to effect political ends that were both right and desirable. He was also "a mighty man of valour;" he was the Julius Cæsar of his age; the Napoleon Bonaparte of his time. He was, truly, a courageous man. Fear of man had no place in his composition.

Could inspiration find more good things to say about any other mere man? It tells us that Naaman was "Captain of the hosts of Syria," "was a great man with his master," and "honorable," "because by him the Lord had given deliverance unto Syria;" he was also "a mighty man of valour;" "but he was a leper." Alas! here is the fly in the ointment. All his greatness is clouded; all his brightest prospects are shadowed; he is a doomed man. What does it avail him to be "Captain of the host of the King of Syria," if he is dying by inches, with this, the most loathsome of diseases, leprosy? What comfort can he derive from "being a great man with his master," since he is conscious of the fact that he is a leper? Do his integrity and honesty and blameless character out-weigh leprosy? What does it avail that the Lord had given deliverance unto Syria by his hand, since he is dying with the leprosy? Notwithstanding the good opinion entertained of him by all his fellow-men, and all the praise inspiration had lavished upon him, he was still a miserable man. His was the most contagious, loathsome and incurable of all maladies, a disease for which na-

ture furnishes no antidote. The very fact that he had risen so high, and justly, too, in the estimation of his fellows, and the king himself, made his condition the more intolerable. As the man who has never known what luxury is, is content to live otherwise, for he never misses it. But he who has tasted its sweets and then is deprived of the same not only misses, but is rendered miserable by the very remembrance.

The wealth of Syria was at Naaman's disposal. He doubtless had secured the most prominent and successful physicians; he had exhausted medical skill, but all to no purpose; the remedies failed to reach and eradicate his disease. All hope of ever being healed had departed, and the final result was as anxiously anticipated as it was dreaded.

What a striking picture all this affords of the condition of the whole human family! In a state of nature we are all spiritual lepers, for "we have all sinned and come short of the glory of God." Nature furnishes no antidote for our spiritual diseases. Neither science nor philosophy has ever discovered a palliative, much less a certain cure. After resorting to every expedient known to men, we are obliged to agree with the clear and explicit declaration of Holy Writ, "Vain is the help of man." After testing the skill of the wisest of physicians, Naaman came to the conclusion that he was a doomed man. But all this time Divine Providence was busy working out, not a remedy, for that had already been

prepared, but a way whereby Naaman could come into the possession of it and be instantly healed. And just here the clear marks of Divine Sovereignty and human free agency became visible, not in conflict, but in the sweetest harmony.

The Syrians by companies had gone into the land of Israel of their own free will and accord, and while there, they committed a theft; they stole a little maid. No one will presume to say that God compelled them to do it, yet it was evidently a part of God's most wonderful plan to bring glory to himself and good to our fellow-man; they were still responsible for the theft, and unless they repented of their sins they must be treated with as thieves to all eternity. It was not accidental either that they stole this particular little maid, although in this they acted as free agents. Nor was it accidental that this particular little maid was acquainted with the prophet Elisha. God had providentially circumstanced her so that she was cognizant of both his wonderful powers and goodness of heart; nor was it by a mere chance that this little maid was introduced into Naaman's family. God had already determined that she should be placed there and in no other family. She was charged with a grand mission, although she was entirely ignorant of what it was. Nor was it accidental that this little maid possessed characteristics of nature that soon ingratiated her into the confidence of Naaman's wife. God had moulded all

these for a specific purpose. Nor was it accidental, hearing of the condition of Naaman, that she said to her mistress, "Would God my lord were with the prophet that is in Samaria, for he would recover him of his leprosy." God's purpose, so completely concealed before, begins now to unfold itself. The riches of his grace, as well as the wisdom of his plans, become visible, and all that was dark and mysterious before is now plain and easy to be understood. The message of the little maid was a divine revelation to Naaman, and "with his heart" he believed every word of it, but with his "head" he did not believe a single word. It was saving faith he was exercising, because it was of the "heart."

In this Naaman represents many true believers. It is a very common mistake, and made by many of the true Israel of God, that they are not the children of adoption because they realize their sinfulness. Naaman was as much a leper after he heard and believed with his "heart" the message as he was before. And if he had been asked, "Do you believe that the prophet in Samaria can cure you?" he would have answered "no." His natural judgment would have compelled this answer, if for no other reason than that he could not understand how it could be possible that Samaria could furnish wiser physicians than Syria, and the latter had tried their skill upon him to no purpose. His conduct proves that he had no confidence whatever in what the little maid said,

yet he believed every word of the message with his "heart," as we will now prove. It is "with the *heart* man believeth unto righteousness."

We know that when two contrary winds meet they create a whirlwind, and the movement is invariably in the direction of the weaker wind. Precisely analogous is the case when the faith of the "head" and the faith of the "heart" are in conflict. The man moves but in a circle, and invariably in the direction of the weaker faith or current. To believe with the "head" and sit still is a very common occurrence, but to believe with the "heart" and sit still is impossible. The "heart" is the dominant power and it moves the man. But still more: Seldom does a man "believe with the head" that Christ has pardoned his sins at the moment he believes the same thing with his "heart." And this accounts, in a great measure, for the equivocal conduct of many who are truly the children of God.

How can we know with absolute certainty that Naaman "believed with his heart" that the prophet Elisha could and would heal him? From the fact that he immediately arose and began his journey. He became active. How can we know with the same degree of certainty that he did not believe the message with his head? For the reason that he started in the wrong direction. He went direct to the king of Syria. Had the little maid said anything about the king of Syria? Not a word. Why did he take

with him ten talents of silver and six thousand pieces of gold and ten changes of raiment? It could have been for no other reason than to pay for his cure. Did he believe that he would receive a cure? Not with his "head." Why did he not go to the prophet as the maid directed and not to the king of Syria? Because he thought that a king had more power and was wiser than a subject. This was very reasonable, though not true. Naaman failed to receive a cure at the hand of the king. What a disappointment! Why did he not return immediately to his home and give up all for lost? Faith of the "heart" can never be shaken by disappointment and it would not let him. If the king could not heal him, he could give him advice. He wrote a letter and put it in the hand of Naaman and sent him to the king of Israel. "And he brought the letter to the king of Israel, saying, Now when this letter is come unto thee, behold, I have herewith sent Naaman my servant to thee that thou mayest recover him of his leprosy." Had the little maid said anything about the king of Israel having power to heal the leprosy? Not a word. Then why should the king of Syria send Naaman with such a request to the king of Israel? And why should Naaman go to him expecting to receive a cure? Because each had more confidence in the king's ability to cure the leprosy than they had in his subject, the prophet. This was also reasonable, but it was far from the

truth. Such conduct comes under observation every day.

The Holy Spirit, when he creates the sinner anew in Christ Jesus, when he "begets him unto a lively hope," and he "believes with his 'heart' unto salvation," seldom does he at once believe with his "head" that he is "born of the Spirit," consequently he goes to some third party, earnestly inquiring, "What must I do to be saved?" And that party is apt to send him to the king of "prayer," reading the "Scriptures" and "attendance upon the means of grace;" in other words, advises him to "pray" read the "Scriptures," etc., and after awhile God will pardon your sins, and peace and joy in believing will flow like a river. Is not this like the king of Syria sending Naaman to the king of Israel to be healed of his leprosy? Why is not the anxious inquirer advised to go direct to the true prophet, the only healer? Because the "head" dictates the other as the wiser and surer course to pursue.

Naaman was disappointed again, and this time it was more grievous than before, for the simple reason that it was not on his own motion that he went to the king of Israel, but by direction of the king of Syria.

As the king of Israel failed to heal him, why did he not return home to die? Faith would not let him. He believed with his "heart" that he would yet receive a cure, though he did not with his head.

Still, to his own consciousness, his malady was making rapid progress, and was pushing him nearer the grave. While he is making experiments with the king's knowledge of medicine and disease, he not only learns how ignorant they are of both, but that his disease was rendering him weaker every hour.

The letter Naaman presented had a very marked influence on the king of Israel. He read "between the lines" what the letter did not contain. He thought he saw mischief intended and great fear came over him, "and he rent his clothes and said, Am I God, to kill and to make alive that this man doth send unto me to recover a man of his leprosy?" This is only the ostensible purpose of Naaman's visit. "See how he seeketh a quarrel against me."

This is is a true exemplification of human nature. His "head" or judgment was busy about less important matters than concerned the heart of either the king of Syria or Naaman. He was thinking of the welfare of his throne; the others were anxious about a bodily cure. He was wiser, as king, than conscientious as a servant of the Most High God.

When the prophet "heard that the king of Israel had rent his clothes, he sent to the king, saying, Wherefore hast thou rent thy clothes? Let him come now to me, and he shall know that there is a prophet in Israel." This is one time that the king willingly took the advice of his subject. It was an easy way out of his dilemma and a sure way to

transfer his responsibility to another. Little did he care for the personal welfare of the prophet. If Elisha fails to effect a cure, he alone must shoulder the responsibility and suffer his just desert.

While communing with kings, Naaman had confidence. He was in his natural element. It is not very humiliating to talk with kings on any subject, and if they bestow favors, it is not very humiliating to accept such at their hands. They may adopt their own plans for bestowing and it will not interfere with the value of the favor.

Naaman never thought of dictating either to the king of Syria or of Israel what to do, nor how to do it. He was perfectly willing for each to adopt his own methods and follow his own judgment. A cure was all he was concerned about. His disappointments and troubles were not at an end, however, for the king of Israel informed him that there is one of his subjects who is a prophet, and he says that he is able to cure your disease; my advice to you is, go and talk with him about the matter. Here the whole tenor of Naaman's conduct changes. He is terribly disappointed that the king of Israel did not cure him. Advising me to go and talk with a prophet is a tacit acknowledgment that he himself was totally wanting in the ability. Can a prophet be greater than a king? My judgment says emphatically, no.

I have been led on by false hopes from the begin-

ning. What a fool I was to leave my home in my weak condition. I knew well enough that the physicians of Syria were wiser than those of Israel. I knew when I left home that I would not receive a cure. Then why did he leave home on such an errand? "Faith of the heart" compelled him. The fact is, Naaman "believed with his heart" that he would return home a sound man, but he did not believe so with his "head."

There is no time to be wasted; he is becoming weaker; the leprosy is eating into his vitals; something must be done, and done quickly. If I take the advice of the King and go to the prophet, I am sure he will fail to cure me. Then why does he not return home to die? "Faith of the heart" won't let him. I have tried kings and they have failed; I am sure the prophet can do no better, but I will go and see him, and besides, I will tell him what to do, and how to do it. I will fix up a plan and I will make him adopt it; he must come to my terms; he is only a subject of the King of Israel. The faith of the intellect is sometimes very stupid, and it makes the conduct of the man very silly. If Naaman knew better than the prophet what ought to be done, he was certainly a great fool for going to him for a cure. The Bible, however, says it is necessary to "become fools in order to be made wise." I will go to the prophet's home, though I am sure he cannot

heal me. I will not walk; I will go in a style in keeping with my station and dignity. I am Naaman, "captain of the host of the King of Syria." So he ascended his chariot and took with him his gold and silver and changes of raiment, and started on his journey to the prophet's home. Had a friend met Naaman on his journey, before he reached the King of Israel, and asked him where he was going, he would frankly have answered, to see the King of Israel; and if asked for what purpose, he would doubtless as frankly have answered, a little maid of his land told me that she knew a prophet over there who could and would cure me of my leprosy. Then, if asked, do you believe what the maid said? he certainly would have answered, no. Why do we think that this would have been his answer? Because he was not on his way to the prophet's home, but to the Kings. Had he been intellectually convinced that the prophet could heal him, he would have sought his services without delay. Still he believed with his heart the message, and this "faith" kept him moving and would not let him return home.

Saving faith does not propose to keep us from being disappointed in our personal calculations, nor compel our intellect to believe in the same line with our heart at once; but it does propose to bring us

off victors in the end, and crown us in glory, and its purposes never fail.

Naaman "came with his horses and with his chariot, and stood at the door of the house of Elisha." He would not go in. His plan was to make the prophet come out to him. I am Naaman, "Captain of the host of the king of Syria." I have already come more than half way, and I am determined that the prophet shall come to me, and I will tell him what to do. But the prophet did not come out of his house, nor did he adopt Naaman's plan. He simply sent a messenger with a certain message to deliver to him. The message was this: "Go and wash in Jordan seven times, and thy flesh shall come again to thee and thou shalt be clean." What a simple thing to do! How easily it can be done. Naaman, though sick, and weak, and faint, can easily obey. The prophet laid no heavier burden on him than he was able to bear. How thoughtful, and good, and kind in the prophet to take into consideration the weak condition of Naaman, and make the conditions of his healing so simple and easy. This, however, was not in accordance with Naaman's notions. It was entirely different from what he expected; besides, the prophet did not consult him as to what he had best do, and the whole thing struck his judgment as supremely ridiculous. How would I, Naaman, "Captain of the host of the king

of Syria," look, washing in Jordan? If there had been any medicinal properties in those waters, it would have been known long ago, and it would have been the Mecca of all lepers. The fact is, the prophet has offered me an insult. He has not done as I expected, and, like Jonah, I have a right to get angry. "Behold, I thought, he will surely come out to me, and stand, and call upon the name of the Lord his God (not mine), and strike his hand over the place and recover the leper." In all this, Naaman was mistaken. The prophet did not care what he "*thought*," and he did not propose to be dictated to. It is very evident, however, that Naaman's "thoughts" were not the prophet's "thoughts," nor his ways the prophet's ways. Elisha was a type of Christ. Naaman remained firm in his resolution not to go in the prophet's house; he was determined to make the prophet come out to him. In this we have another vivid picture of the conduct of the tens of thousands of souls who go from the very vestibule of the kingdom into everlasting perdition, not because they might not have entered, but because they are unwilling to comply with the conditions. It cannot be doubted that many earnest men make ship-wreck of their souls by simply ignoring God's plan of saving sinners, for no other reason than that it seems to them some other plan would be better. There were no medicinal properties in Jordan

waters. A thousand other lepers might have gone and dipped seventy-seven times, and they had all died of their disease. Until Naaman dipped seven times, the responsibility of his cleansing was on himself. When he fulfilled the conditions, then the responsibility was on the prophet, and the prophet could not afford to fail.

Naaman may dictate to him as much as he pleases, but he will not change his plan—God's plan. Naaman must obey to the letter or die a leper. As a representative character, the Bible furnishes no better. Each sinner has his own plan upon which he proposes God shall save him, and he is determined to make God adopt it. God's message to the sinner is, "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." One says it would be much better to "feel a load roll off the conscience," and have some unmistakable evidence, by an entire change in my feelings, that my sins are pardoned. And until God does all this, I am determined not to believe—*i. e.*, not to adopt His plan. Another thinks this a better plan than God's to be stricken down like Saul was, and to see a bright light and hear some wonderful articulations from heaven. Until God sees proper to do and show all this, I don't propose to obey any commands. Well, these plans may be more reasonable, but they are not God's, and He will not change his in order to save their souls.

Naaman thought he had a right to get angry and turn away in a rage from both the messenger and the message, but that did not heal his leprosy. The prophet was not affected with leprosy, and it certainly did not matter to him whether Naaman went to Jordan or not. One thing is certain, the prophet did not propose to adopt Naaman's plan nor change his own; if Naaman will adopt the prophet's, and comply with the conditions, he will be healed, but if not, he must die a leper. God's plan of saving sinners has already been revealed, and it is the same one adopted by all the redeemed in heaven, and there has never been a single failure, and never will be; hence, all sinners who will not be saved on it prove their folly and must repent of it to all eternity. God will not divide his glory with any sinner. Nor will he be dictated to, nor will he even condescend to argue the question with him, in so far as his plans and purposes are concerned. As a sovereign, he works according to the counsel of his own will, and as the sinner is the only beneficiary, it is a presumptuous sin for him to tell God what he must do and how to do it. The Psalmist prayed to be delivered from such sins, and it would certainly be the part of all spiritual lepers to offer the same prayer, and then add, "Do unto us, O Lord, as to Thyself seemeth good." It is supreme folly to question the wisdom of God's plan of saving sinners, and worse

than madness to suppose it possible that the creature can improve upon it.

The message the prophet sent Naaman was a simple one and easily understood, and as easy to be obeyed; but not being in the line of his "thoughts," it made him angry, and he turned away in a rage. This is not to be wondered at, since every age of the world has witnessed the same sort of folly. At one time the Patriarchs were God's messengers, and he gave them a specific message to deliver to the people for their good. But the people, as a general thing, had no confidence in the message and, therefore, they thought they had just cause to become angry with the messengers. It was a strange proceeding, but such conduct is of every day occurrence.

Then God sent the prophets bearing the same loving message and with the same assurances of good; but they despised the message, and some of the prophets suffered severely for their zeal to bless their fellow-men. Isaiah they sawed asunder. To us, it seems marvelously strange that those who were conscious of having a fatal disease, and one too, that is capable of clinging to the soul to all eternity, should object to any plan of being cured. But such has always been the case. Still, God was forgiving and patient.

God said they "will surely reverence my son."

Loving our race so well, he sent his only begotten and well beloved son with this message to the sinking world: "He that believeth in me though he were dead shall live." What an encouraging message! and it does seem that every spiritual leper would be glad to receive a cure on these terms, but it was not in the line of their "thoughts," and they said, "Crucify him!" "crucify him!" and they put him to death. Since all power in heaven and on earth is in the hands of the blessed Redeemer, does it not seem strange that he will now save especially those who put him to death, and any others who crucify him daily? It is because he is God and not man that the whole world has not been consumed. Yes, the redemption effected through his crucifixion is so great that even the one who thrust the spear into his side will be freely forgiven and glorified if he will repent and turn unto the Lord.

Christ chose and sent forth twelve Apostles, and he put this similar message in their mouths to deliver to the people: "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved." And even with the full blaze of gospel day shining right in their faces the people did not like the message; many rejected it and turned away with an air of pity and commiseration for the credulous, simple-minded and simple-hearted messengers. Nevertheless, Naaman must go down to Jordan and wash seven times, according to the very

letter of the prophet's message, or die a leper. So, too, God's messages to sinners must be believed and accepted or they die eternally with their spiritual disease.

Naaman ought to have known that the business of a messenger is simply to deliver the message with which he is entrusted—not to change it. Then why say to the messenger "Are not Abana and Pharpar, rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel? May I not wash in them and be clean?" How did Naaman know that Damascus waters were better than the Jordan? He had never tested the virtues of either as to their healing properties. Oh, it was simply his opinion; it was what he thought. Yes, and he "thought" that the prophet would "come out to him;" but in this he was mistaken also. The messenger was not the prophet, though he brought and delivered the prophet's message. Might he not be mistaken as to the virtues of Abana's waters? The fact is he did not want to comply with the prophet's plan, not because it was the prophet's, but because it was not his own. He "thought" his the better. How anxious he must have been to have some one to share with him the responsibility of rejecting the message of the prophet since he sought the counsel of the servant as to the propriety of washing in Abana or Pharpar, after assuring him they were better than Jordan waters. But the messenger

had no authority to change the message and he positively refused to assume any further responsibility. If Naaman had believed with his "head" that compliance with the prophet's message would have secured perfect healing he would certainly have gone to Jordan without urging a single objection. But he was farther from believing now with his head what the little maid said than ever before, because of having been so frequently disappointed. But this last disappointment was greater than any of the preceding, for the reason that he had fixed up a plan that was so reasonable, and the messenger would not agree with him. Why does he not now give up all hope and return home to get his house in order and calmly await the approach of his end? "Faith of the heart" will not let him. There has not been a moment since he heard of the prophet's power that his faith of "heart" has wavered, and there has not been a moment that he has really believed with his "head" that the prophet could cure him. Hence his strange conduct. He did not take a single step that did not prove his folly. The little maid said nothing about kings; yet he went to kings. She said nothing about the plan of the prophet on which he would work to insure a cure, yet Naaman anticipated him with a plan which proved to be entirely different from the prophet's. Naaman's was, the "prophet" must do "thus and so;" the prophet's was, "Naaman" must

do thus and so. And Naaman thought his plan the best and argued the point with the messenger; got angry because he failed to convince *him*, and *then* "turned away in a rage." Was there anything in the prophet's message to stir his wrath? Was there any thing repulsive about Jordan waters? Yet he preferred to go to Abana, if he must go somewhere. If he was really seeking a cure, did it matter whether the prophet should communicate with him personally rather than through a messenger? Yet he "turned away in a rage." "Behold, I 'thought' he would surely come out to me and stand and call on the name of the Lord *his* God, and strike his hand over the place and recover the leper." Well, in all this he was simply mistaken. His "thoughts" led him astray.

What a vivid picture of human nature does the conduct of Naaman furnish! The same thing comes under the observation of the pulpit every day. There are spiritual Naamans by the million. Their folly is just as glaring. Ambassadors of Christ are only messengers to whom messages from God to the people are entrusted, and they must deliver them, and under no circumstances whatever have they a right to change them. Still they are complained at and are criticised for being so particular; and not unfrequently they are asked, "Won't something else do as well?" God tells them to deliver this par-

ticular message, "Go work to-day in my vineyard," and one will ask, "Cannot I be just as good out of the vineyard as in it? The church is not the Saviour; therefore I see no good reason why I should be a member of it. I will, therefore, ignore the message." Is not this Naaman asking the messenger, "Are not Abana and Pharpar, rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel? May I not wash in them and be clean?" On no subject are the people so ready to quibble, find fault and raise and urge objections as on the subject of religion. On no other subject do people think themselves so wise, while such fools, and know what is best for them to do, when, in fact, they know nothing at all. A theory a thousand times advanced, and a thousand times refuted, is esteemed as true to-day, and is contended for with as much zeal as when first formed, especially when it opposes the law of Christian duty and obligation. It is not the case on other subjects. All scholars maintained and taught the theory at one time that the world is flat. But advancing science exploded this theory, and no scholar now ever thinks of offering the same arguments to prove that the world is flat as were once offered and considered conclusive. If he should, all scholars would think him insane. But in religion it is different. Precisely the same theories and the same arguments against the Christian religion that were

originated and zealously maintained eighteen hundred years ago, and each year since, have been a thousand times refuted, are used against the same religion to-day, and I see no reason why they will not be continued so long as human nature remains the same. Accumulated and still accumulating evidence of the truth of our holy religion has but little weight with the ungodly. Oh! that all spiritual lepers would see in Naaman their folly, and would go immediately and confidently to the Great Healer! Then they would find a cure.

Naaman is persuaded, however, to stop his raving and start down to Jordan; still, he did not believe with his "head" that he would receive a cure, even though the prophet (not the maid) said that he would. Then why did he not return home? For the simple reason he believed with his "heart" that he would, and saving faith pushed him forward.

The prophet's message was, "Wash in Jordan seven times and thy flesh shall come again to thee, and thou shalt be clean."

As regards medicinal properties in the waters of the Jordan, he might justly be suspicious; his reason was not running on a "fool's errand" when he questioned, and even came to the conclusion that such a thing was impossible. The prophet never asserted that there was. Naaman might also have come to the conclusion (and it would have been very reasona-

ble), if there be no medicinal properties in the water it would certainly do as well to wash in any other river as the Jordan. But the cure was not contingent in the water, but in obedience. The prophet had a perfect right to impose any conditions he pleased, and Naaman had no right to object; he alone was to receive (not confer) the benefit. Therefore, to refuse compliance is simply to assume the responsibility of dying with his disease, while to fulfill the conditions would make the prophet responsible for the cure.

Naaman reached the Jordan, and while looking at the water it seemed as unreasonable that washing seven times would heal him as when he left the prophet's house. In fact, there was not the slightest evidence that he could discover that would be just ground for him to change the conclusion of his head. His "head" was still skeptical. Then when he went into the water his thoughts can be well imagined. He went down once, came up a leper; went down a second time and came up a leper. We can imagine him soliloquizing, "I knew there were no medicinal properties in the Jordan. What a fool I was for coming here! I am chagrined and sorry that I came." Is not this like many young Christians? They believe with their heart in the Lord Jesus, but they doubt that they are Christians. Saving faith pushes them on to obedience; they

come out from the world, unite themselves with the church, and then afterward see and appreciate the fact that they are sinners still. Then they think they have made a mistake and begin to reproach themselves for the stand they have taken, and not infrequently is it the case that they try to make some one else responsible for their mistake. "I was over-persuaded; I knew all the while that I had experienced no change." Such expressions are often conscientiously made, but the reason is obvious. The faith of the "head" and the faith of the "heart" are out of harmony. Naaman went down the third time and came up a leper. "I am more convinced now than ever before that I must die a leper. Everybody can see that I am not a whit better than I was before washing the first time. In fact, I am worse; the disease is eating deeper every moment." God never makes the sick better—he cures them. He went down the fourth time, came up a leper, not the slightest evidence of improvement. Went down the fifth time, came up a leper. "Possibly my conduct in the presence of the messenger offended him, and perhaps he may have returned and informed the prophet and he may have become angry also, and by some means or other has taken all the curative properties out of the water. I regret showing my temper. I fear I have been the sole cause of my own overthrow and possibly of my

own death. If so, I only am responsible. I now and here relieve both the messenger and the prophet from all blame." Ah! Naaman is now not far from a cure. Whenever a sinner begins to take upon himself the entire responsibility for his sins he is not far from the kingdom of God. Naaman went down the sixth time and came up a leper. "Well, I am sure now that I am to blame for my conduct from the moment I left home till I stood at the door of the house of Elisha. I determined at the first not to submit to be dictated to by him. I preferred the company of kings, and I verily believed that if a cure was possible they would be most apt to effect it. I only am to blame for my conduct before the prophet's house. I am sure I acted very indiscreetly in trying to entrap the messenger. I am sure I would have had nothing to reproach myself for if I had only meekly complied with the conditions of the prophet, and had not endeavored to have my own way. The prophet said wash seven times. I have washed six, and there is not the slightest evidence of any good having been accomplished. It is exceedingly unreasonable that one more time will do what six have failed to do. I can but perish, and, therefore, I will make the effort." He went down the seventh time and came up *clean*. What a wonderful change must have taken place in Naaman's feelings! He could scarcely believe that

he was perfectly healed. The very thought seemed "too good to be true." But look at the facts in the case. Was it not the same "faith of the heart" that caused Naaman to leave his home as soon as he heard of the prophet's power to heal his disease that caused him to wash the seventh time? Was there any increase of that faith while he was making his circuit by king's palaces down to Jordan? Or was that "faith" diminished in the least? During all his journey is there the slightest evidence that he had the least intellectual conviction that he would receive a cure? On the other hand, his entire conduct proves that with his "heart" he believed every word the little maid uttered, for he kept moving forward; but with his "head" he did not believe a single word; if he had, he would have gone direct from home to the prophet.

Naaman's healing is an apt illustration of this particular teaching of the Bible, "With the heart man believes unto righteousness." Thus it is, before the child of God has an inward consciousness of pardoned sin, he does not believe with his "head" certainly that his sins have been pardoned. And is not this the reason why God's children so often doubt their acceptance with him? And instead of saying, "I know I have passed from death unto life," they can only say, "I hope I have." Their *desires* to serve God never change, and this is one

of the Bible proofs of their adoption, still their feelings are always changing according to circumstances, and they are apt to take their feelings as the indices of their spiritual status. This is a very common as well as a great mistake. Many persons will not be convinced that they are Christians until they have an inward consciousness of pardoned sin. They will point out the precise time and place of their conversion. We all know what they mean. They mean that they know the precise time when they first had an inward consciousness of pardoned sin. This, however, is a high degree of growth in grace. Naaman was exercising saving faith long before he reached Jordan, and it was his faith that saved him. That is, it was the instrumental cause of him going to Jordan and washing seven times. Such persons will tell you that they had striven for salvation a long time, possibly one, two, three or five years, and all at once God pardoned their sins. What was it that kept them striving so long? "Faith of the heart." They were certainly Christians all these years, as it is certain that nothing but grace will make men strive persistently after salvation. Those persons "believed with their hearts," from the first moment of their striving, that the "blood of Jesus cleanseth from all sin," but they did not believe with their "head" that that blood had been applied to them.

This is a very common mistake, and with the Bible's teaching on this point, ought to cease to exist altogether, because the revelation is so plain and positive.

Naaman's mind, his intellectual being, underwent a most wonderful, radical change the moment he *saw* that he was cleansed, and from this moment all conflict between "head" and "heart" ceased. He no longer moved in a circle; he cared nothing for the company of kings now, nor longer sought their counsel. His heart was filled with gratitude and love. The prophet Elisha was more to him than all the kings of earth—aye! than all the world beside. And as an evidence of this fact, he preferred to be with the prophet; hence he went direct to his home. It is also evident that he was still ignorant of the nature of the prophet's motives, purposes and mission in this world. He could not understand how he could afford, consistently with his own interests, to perform such a wonderful cure gratuitously, and that, too, upon one he might justly consider an enemy, since the Syrian army, of which Naaman was commander, had invaded his country, and, among other robberies, had stolen a little maid, and she, at that very time, was serving in his own house. Naaman was more than willing to give all his sheckels of silver and gold for the benefit he secured.

You perceive that Naaman could not separate the spiritual from the pecuniary. As an honorable man, he could not conscientiously receive so much without returning an equivalent, or if not that, at least a princely remuneration.

Thus it is with young Christians, especially when they reach the point of growth in grace of a consciousness of pardoned sin: their first impulse is to render, if not an equivalent, still give to God all they can for His so great salvation. Hence, they resolve "*to do*" thus and so, believing that God will accept it at their hands, not as manifest tokens of their gratitude and love, but as the best offering they can bring to pay Him for salvation.

The prophet would not receive any compensation from Naaman, neither will the Lord Jesus receive even your obedience to his own positive commands if the motive be mercenary, and not of gratitude and love. Naaman must accept his cleansing as a free gift. He can show his appreciation as much as he pleases; he may manifest his gratitude to the fullest extent; he may tell everybody who it was that healed him, and by what means the healing was effected. All this is perfectly congenial with the prophet's feelings and wishes; but to think of remunerating him with a "price," for a thing that is "priceless," aye, far above "all price," is a sin; to think that such a cure as he had received could be

purchased with "silver and gold" is to underestimate its value, and put the service of the prophet of God on a level with the veriest menial, and therefore was an insult that the prophet was obliged to resent. Naaman had much to learn, even after he had the consciousness of being perfectly healed.

So, too, with Christians. At first they know but little of Christianity, of the gift of God, of the methods of grace, of their duties and obligations, and of the motives that should prompt them to the performance of every good work. They have everything to learn. But though their progress may be slow, still it will be true, because the Lord is now their teacher.

The great benefit Naaman received in the form of perfect cleansing could not satisfy his immortal cravings. He wanted something more, and that something he believed was within the power of the prophet to bestow. But he was ashamed to ask for what he considered a very large blessing. He thought it prudent to make a small request this time. In fact he was totally ignorant of the resources of the prophet. He did not understand the Scripture injunction, "Open thy mouth wide and I will fill it." Hence he said, "Will you please give me two mules' burden of earth?" What could he have wanted with this amount of earth? The fact is he wanted something and he did not know what. The prophet

granted him no more than he requested. He could have given him a thousand times as much and not have diminished the supply in the least. "Ask and ye shall receive." Ask for *great* blessings, not for dirt. "God is rich in mercies" and "giving doth not impoverish" him. I apprehend the lesson taught the disciples of Jesus by this request of Naaman is, when God pardons the sinner he (the sinner) realizes that he is the recipient of a great blessing. But the very blessing itself creates desires for other blessings, and he is ashamed to ask for great ones, thinking it more prudent to ask for smaller gifts. Truly Naaman is a representative man, and in his conduct, from the moment the little maid assured him that there was a prophet in Israel that could cure him until he dipped the seventh time in Jordan, he represents vast multitudes of Christians before they grow to the degree of grace in which they first have an inward conciousness of pardoned sin.

Naaman's conduct proves both the persistency and power of saving faith, (*i. e.*) the faith of the heart. It conclusively shows also the persistency and folly of the want of intellectual conviction until an inward consciousness of pardoned sin is experienced. The "head" will not weigh spiritual evidence, and when compelled to look it in the face will positively deny its testimony although it cannot account for its

existence on rational grounds at all. For these reasons the inconsistencies in Christian conduct appear so frequently, and on these grounds the doubts that so often cloud the spiritual sky of many good Christians are accounted for.

Naaman's conduct illustrates very forcibly and clearly two of the explicit declarations of Divine Inspiration, viz.: That "with the heart man believeth unto righteousness," and "if ye will *do* my will ye shall know of the doctrine." Yet, while human nature remains as it is, we may expect to see the conflict waged between the "faith of the head" and the "faith of the heart;" we need not be surprised when we see the clear teachings of the Bible misinterpreted; we may continue to expect human opinions and human notions to contradict the clear declarations of the Bible, and as far as Christianity is concerned, to see men live on in the future as they have lived in the past. Still all this does not cause our faith to waver concerning the blessed promise of God to his only son, "The heathen shall be thine inheritance and the uttermost parts of the earth thy possession." As in the past, the grace of God has wrought most astounding revolutions; advanced in the face of the most determined opposition, and onward pushed its "own resistless way;" so the same grace will manifest in the future no less of its divinity, and with the same self-propelling power

will up-root and overturn the principles of skepticism until Christ shall reign King of nations as he now reigns King of saints.

To this end the church is organized, and being imbued with the spirit of her Lord, she becomes a mighty co-worker with him to bless all the nations of the world.

"Waft, waft, ye winds His story,
And you, ye waters roll,
Till, like a sea of glory,
It spreads from pole to pole;
Till o'er our ransomed nature,
The Lamb for sinners slain,
Redeemer, King, Creator,
In bliss returns to reign."

CHAPTER XII.

"HOPE, THE ANCHOR OF THE SOUL."

While there exists a good reason for the conflict between the "faith of the head" and "faith of the heart," as we have seen in the preceding chapter, there can be no conflict nor uncertainty as to the object upon which both "faith" and "hope" fasten, which alone guarantees to the soul a blessed immortality. Christ, and Christ only, as set forth in the Bible, is the saviour of sinners. A right understanding of the doctrines of revelation not only

places Christ in the very center of the Christian system, but it never fails to produce those emotions and joys in the bosom of the sincere inquirer which are themselves eminently religious. The clearer our comprehension of truth, the more perceptible will be its reflex influence in controlling our wills and guiding our affections. "Truth to be loved needs only to be seen."

A vast deal of the annoying perplexity so common in Christian experience arises, in part, from the vague notions entertained concerning the precise latitude or province over which certain fundamental doctrines are presumed to hold sway. The lines of division that separate them from other doctrines are obliterated, and the territory of one is permitted to infringe upon the territory of another. The consequence is a compromise of both doctrines and a confusion in their interpretation. For instance, stretch faith beyond its proper bounds, extend it sufficiently to cover a part of the territory or doctrine of hope, and then stand on the stolen ground and explain faith viewed from that standpoint if you can; understand its workings as an experimental grace. Do you not see at once the confusion that necessarily arises? You have obliterated the line that separates "faith" from "hope;" you have extended the domain of "faith" beyond its proper limits, consequently if you construe *that* as *faith*, which

is only *hope*, then it should not be a marvel that you are unable to explain or account for much confusion that arises in your own mind concerning these doctrines.

The same is true with any other doctrines that are closely allied in their mode of operation and effects. For example, "patience" and "submission." The boundary of patience is clearly marked in the Bible. The evidences of its existence are plainly noted, and the precise results it achieves are stated in a positive, unmistakable manner. The same is true of submission. If you should mistake *patience* for *submission* you at once destroy the grace, as far as your experience is concerned. You cannot rejoice in it. It fails to produce its proper fruit, for the simple reason that you are looking for the effects that the causes which produce submission work. There is a certain set of causes which produce submission, and another set of causes altogether which reveal the existence of *patience* and develop it. Mistake the causes and the grace will not seem to be such as the Bible says it is. Patience and submission look very much alike, yet the latter may be forced; the former is beyond the control of force; it exists as a grace divine, or it exists not at all.

So it is with faith and hope. They must not be confounded. The precise limits of each must be clearly understood. Those limits are clearly defined

in the word of God. Faith is pronounced to be "the substance of things *hoped* for." Here *faith* is one thing, *hope* quite another thing. Faith is a warring grace, and it is represented by inspiration as that part of the armor called the shield, "taking the shield of faith," a something to parry every blow. It is also represented as a fighting grace, "fight the good fight of faith." Thus it is evident that faith is active, is strong, is victorious. It is never represented as being at rest; it is always in motion. Hope, on the other hand, is a still, quiet, immovable grace. It is not a shield to turn on all sides, to catch every dart, but an anchor cast into the depths and resting where all is quiet, holding on so firmly to its rock that the fury of the tempest above cannot move it. It is not an end in itself, but a means to an end; yet, notwithstanding, there is, in fact, so wide a difference between "*faith*" and "*hope*" in our Christian experience we often construe them as being one and the same. I am far from believing, however, that a clear apprehension and appreciation of the differences between them are essential to salvation, because we have reason to believe that thousands of souls are now glorified, who never understood that there was the slightest difference between them; but I do say that the evidences of our acceptance with God will be much more satisfactory to ourselves if we constantly keep the distinc-

tions the Bible makes between them before our eyes.

In discussing the doctrine of Christian *hope*, not as distinguished from faith, but as a grace of the spirit itself, it will not be amiss to define its proper limits; confine it to its own field of operation; show how it works and note the immediate and remote effects of its working. In order not to be misunderstood I will first name its counterfeits. The hypocrite has *a* hope. But, saith the Scriptures, "it shall perish." Though in appearance it is like, still it cannot be a grace of the spirit. The blind idolater also has *hope*, but not being "anchored within the veil," but on some creature, becomes his ruin. The *disobedient*, in a land of Bibles and churches, hope; but their *hope* will most assuredly prove their destruction, and a far greater destruction than that of the heathen idolater, simply because of having light, yet will not see. If I mistake not, all unconverted men are found in one or other of these classes. It is certain that no man lives without hope, and it is equally certain that many men cast their anchor outside the veil. It is a matter of astonishment to many Christians why some men who, according to the plain teachings of the Bible, are so far out of the right way, still are so indifferent to the realities of the future. The *hope* of such men is as *real* as the hope of the Christian, but it is subject to a thousand contingencies,

any one of which can easily destroy it; it cannot endure. They are deceived. Their "hope" is not "against hope," else they would be anxious, earnest, restless. It is the "hope of the hypocrite" which shall perish, but while it lives it is as real as though it were a Christian *grace*. The drowning man hopes that the straw floating on the surface will render him material assistance towards gaining the shore, while his judgment pronounces against any such conclusion, but *hope* is stronger than judgment, and he grasps the straw.

So it is in every-day life. Men know, their judgments are convinced, that while pursuing a course, reprobated both by judgment and the clear teachings of the Bible, that they cannot be saved, still they hope against both that they will be, and their *hope* being the more powerful, they go contrary to their judgment and the Bible teachings, and eventually perish.

This is true of all men who are engaged in un-Christian occupations. They know they are doing wrong—they frankly acknowledge it, still their *hope* is on the side of wrong, and it controls their judgment. There is nothing in the word of God more clearly revealed or more easily understood than that it is a Christian duty, an obligation that all men owe to themselves and to their God, to come out from the world and be separate from it, to ac-

knowledge the right of Christ to rule over them; that the Bible simply, though positively, affirms that such a course is necessary in order not to be denied before the Father and his holy angels. Still in the face of all this, which accords with sound judgment, the *hope* of all those who are engaged in questionable callings is that they can be saved without complying with the requisitions of the gospel. Hence, so many never "believe to the saving of their souls," and consequently never obey the divine commands, "Come out from the world," "Go work in my vineyard," "Do this in remembrance of me." Their hope is not in Christ's obedience, but in something else, not anchored within the veil, but outside altogether. O thou delusive hope! wrecked will be the craft that trusts to thy deceptive strength.

The hope which is a Christian grace "is an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, cast within the veil." It is not cast on riches, honors, family influence or character; these, though good in themselves, are outside of the veil. It is not cast on the lease we may think we have on life, or weeks, or months, or years to repent and believe in; these, too, are outside the veil. It is cast on Christ, who has entered within, where all is calm, stable and eternal.

Hope is not an end in itself, but a means to an

end. It has its purpose clearly defined and works to that end. The anchor is constructed for a particular purpose. It is not the ship, nor cable, nor chart, nor compass. Each of these are useful in their proper places—aye! are indispensable; but take them out of their place, then they are perfectly useless; or let them change places, one with another, and disaster follows as a necessary consequence. Throw out the compass in a storm instead of the anchor, and the vessel flies before the wind and wave and dashes upon the beach. Steer by the anchor and you demonstrate your folly. Each is useful in its own place, and to be useful it must be performing its proper work. The anchor, while in the ship, is a burden to carry; to be useful, it must be performing its purpose. In all this we have an apt illustration of the church. All Christians are not called to the *same* work, but all are called to *some* work. There is something for each one to do. Those who claim the contemptible privilege of having nothing to do, or who do nothing, are burdens for the church to carry. They are spiritual parasites, living by sapping the life of the church. These are the ones who are most likely to breed a moral pestilence, stir up strife and destroy peace.

There is something exquisitely beautiful in the idea that the Christian's anchor is cast where all is still, calm and quiet. How much firmer its hold

than if cast in the rough waters of the sea of life among the waves of tribulation, disappointment and trial. Being cast within the veil, the vessel may be tossed by the storms of adversity it may roll upon the billows of bereavement and sorrow, but upon the breakers it can never dash. No other *hope* reaches so far; no other is so safe and enduring.

There is a tempest gathering that will burst in fury and lash the sea of life into foam. This storm will try every cable, will beat on every craft, and try every anchor. On that sea will be seen innumerable wrecks, tossed by the waves, but mercy's ear will be shut to the cries of the sinking, and her hand will refuse to grasp the perishing. Yet amid the terrible commotion, and side by side with shattered vessels, here and there will be seen a craft sublimely riding the billows, mocking the fury of the storm, because held by the anchor cast remote from the surface, where no wave rolls, nor torrent sweeps, but fixed in the cleft of that Rock which will survive the "wreck of empires and crash of worlds." These are they who brave the storm, and will come out of their great tribulation like the Hebrew children from their furnace of flame, and will rise to the paradise of God, to participate forever in those joys and raptures which are the substance of their undying *hopes*. Ye candidates for eternity; ye men immortal; ye last and grandest work of God; ye

men born to live, after systems perish; born to live after the moon shall be turned into blood, the stars wander from their course, and the sun is dashed from the skies; born to live after this world shall be wrapped in flames, and witness the end of all created good; O, ye immortal men, rise to the Pisgah height of Christian privilege; view the eternal landscape, radiant with light divine, where chrystal waters lave forever, and health and peace, and joy and rapture eternal dwell; and there cast your anchor of hope; fix it on the central figure, the pride and power of heaven, and you are safe. The storms may howl around you; the thunders roll over you, and tribulation may whet its sword, and sorrow may weep tears of blood, and persecution, the fiercest and most savage hell itself can invent, may assault your craft, but no harm will result, you will still stand sublimely victorious, and in God's own appointed time, sweetly smiling, you will glide into the eternal haven of repose.

It is *hope* that secures the Christian against all the whispers of satan which are in antagonism with the plain teachings of the gospel. It fortifies him against all false doctrine. The man who believes in Jesus as the mediator of the new covenant, and the only Saviour of sinners, and who has intelligently fixed his hope of salvation in Him, will not be "carried about with every wind of doctrine;" will refuse to listen to the orator who proclaims any

creature superior to his Saviour, and will not believe any voice that does not speak in harmony with the voice of Jesus. "The man who has this hope, (says an eminent divine,) will have no ear for doctrines which in the least degree depreciate the person or work of the Mediator." You take from him all that he holds most precious, if you could once shake his confidence in the atonement. His hope presupposes faith in the Saviour, and faith has reasons for the persuasion that Jesus is God's Son and "able to save unto the uttermost," and when this faith generates a living hope, the man has so direct and overwhelming interest in holding fast the truth, that it must be more than a specious objection, or a well-turned cavil, which will prevail to the loosening of his grasp. Therefore we affirm of the hope of salvation, that he who has it, is little likely to be corrupted, or carried hither and thither by false doctrine.

Hope is the Christian's anchor in tribulation. An eloquent writer has said, "When tribulation comes, and the crested waves are swelling higher and higher, why should you expect him to be driven back, or swallowed up? Is it the loss of property with which he is visited and which threatens to shake his dependence upon God? Hope whispers that he has in heaven an enduring substance, and he takes joyfully the spoiling of his goods. Is it the loss of friends? He sorrows not, "even as others

which have no hope," but is comforted by the knowledge that "them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with Him." Is it sickness? Is it the treachery of friends? Is it the failure of cheerished plans which hang the firmament with blackness and work the waters into fury? None of these things move him, for *Hope* assures him "that these light afflictions which are for a moment, worketh for him a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." Is it death which, advancing in its awful tread, would dissipate his confidence and snap his cordage and send him adrift? His is a hope full of immortality; he knows in whom he has believed, and is persuaded that he is able to keep that which he hath committed unto him against that day. Christian hope, anchored within the veil, holds the man on life's tempestuous sea so firmly, that naught can disturb nor destroy his peace. Every Christian, under the darkest cloud, when satan whispers "curse God and die," like the grand Apostle answers back, "Who shall separate me from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerers, through him that loved us. I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor Principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from

the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus, our Lord." This is the grand achievement of hope; this, its sublime purpose; this, the inevitable result.

To exhaust this subject would require more time than our limited space, and our present purpose, will justify. We might point out the different degrees of peace and joy, under different circumstances, which such a hope brings to the believer; we might enumerate all those attractive, pleasing, and permanent objects within the veil, on which this hope fastens; we might point out many of the innumerable victories it has achieved from Adam and Abel down to the present; we might lift the curtain of the future of the world, till wrapt in flame, and note the souls that will be saved, according to the scriptures, but there is no necessity for so doing. It is never out of place, however, to urge all Christians to firmness of purpose and dilligence in all Christian activities, and warn all others to examine the ground of their hopes. If, perchance, any reader of these lines, finds that his hope is not anchored on Christ, within the veil, we urge him to lose no time in lifting and changing his position. If any other Rock than Christ is chosen, and hope of salvation fixed on it, be assured that the sun in his course is not more irresistible than will be your awful doom. "Be not deceived;" "Awake to righteousness;" "Fight the good fight of Faith." Then, when you are being

tossed upon the foaming billows of tribulation; when your craft is being floated toward the shore, the blessed throng that will await your coming will rejoice in escorting your sanctified soul to the heaven of the redeemed.

"Soon—soon and forever our union shall be
Made perfect, our glorious Redeemer, in Thee;
The sins and the sorrows of time shall be o'er,
Its pangs and its partings remembered no more,
When life cannot fail, and when death cannot sever,
Then Christians with Christ shall be—soon and forever."

CHAPTER XIII.

FAITH, THE UNIMPEACHABLE WITNESS TO SPIRITUAL OR REVEALED TRUTH.

Life is a tremendous struggle. This is witnessed in its lowest types, as much as in its highest. The grasses fight for existence and the stronger destroy the weaker. The larger fishes in the waters prey upon the lesser and more helpless. The birds of the air have their enemies in birds, and the beasts of the field have their enemies in beasts. And in maintaining the struggle the stronger, if not the better, ordinarily survive. Yet in all this realm, there is no improvement without the aid of human skill. In other words, grass cannot improve itself or advance to a higher or better grade; neither can the fishes,

birds or beasts make any progress of themselves on the ascending scale of development or improvement. Still the warfare goes on among themselves, but it is only a fight for existence.

But entering within the sphere of rational and sentient beings, we find a different state of things to exist. The activity and struggle are increased, but both are put forth for different purposes. It is not so much a struggle for existence, as it is for *supremacy*. The effort is not to destroy one another, but one party works so as to be benefited by the services of the other. Brain is pitted against muscle, and seldom fails to control it and reap largely of its fruits. In this fight, the same honesty of purpose and methods of procedure so manifest among the lower creation vanishes, and in their stead, cunning, deception (which is a modest way of lying) and chicanery, become visible. To take advantage is the rule of the world, though to its credit we must say, there are not wanting many noble exceptions. But we are not dealing, just now, with the exceptions, but with the rule. The very profession of friendship, especially if the one making it, tries by words simply to secure confidence, is considered just ground now to suspect something covertly concealed in the heart. The time was when men spoke their thoughts honestly and candidly, and to suspect their veracity was a grievous insult. As to the present you must

be the judge. It is a sad commentary on the history of our present civilization, and if it were true, only in the social, civil and political spheres, it would not be so bad. For in these confidence is understood to rest on a weak foundation, but when the same evil principle crops out in the speech and conduct of professed Christians towards each other, it is certainly to be more deeply deprecated and more severely censured, for the reason that it beclouds their profession and stamps a stigma upon the religion of the gospel, rendering it less potent to command the homage and reverence of the world. To resort to trickery, in order to carry a point, may accord perfectly well with the political ethics of the day, but in a man of God, it is inexcusable, no matter what the occasion or circumstances under which it is practiced. A religious "*trickster*" is a logical contradiction in terms, as much as to say an "honest thief." Still, whatever form it takes, it is a struggle for supremacy. If in a legitimate way it is noble, otherwise it is sinful.

But, apart from life's struggle for mere existence or supremacy, there is a struggle on a higher plane for something of infinitely more value, and which both our instincts and intuitions demand that we consider most sincerely and prayerfully. The unsatisfying nature of all truth, save religious, is a sufficient reason why we should devote more time to the con-

sideration of the latter, and less than is ordinarily the case to the former. All truth, however, is of God, and is "profitable," whether it be scientific, philoshphic or religious; in other words, natural or revealed. As there are but three classes of truth, we propose to examine them in order. Each class has its own witnesses, and when testifying to truths, in their respective classes, they cannot tell a falsehood, but when they change classes, they cannot tell the truth.

1st. There is material or physical truth; and our *five* senses are the witnesses.

2nd. There is scientific and philosophic truth; and *reason* is the witness.

3rd. There is spiritual or religious truth; and *faith* is the witness. All certain knowledge comes to us through one or other of these channels. We will examine each class separately and see the character of the testimony of each witness.

1st. Material or physical truth. All certain knowledge we can possibly acquire concerning this class of truth, comes to us through the medium of our "*five senses.*"

I glance my eye along the line of farthest vision, and I am fascinated with the beauty and sublimity of the scene. All the logic in the universe could not make me believe that this landscape is anything else than beautiful. I might be perfectly ignorant

of the principles of logic, and therefore unable to detect the falacy in a premise, or flaw in the reasoning, which concludes that the landscape is horribly ugly; still I would not believe the conclusion, because my eye swears that it is beautiful, and my eye is the only witness to beauty. I would be a fool to discredit its testimony. Logic is ignorant of beauty, and therefore is not a credible witness.

I look at my coat and I say it is black. No amount of reasoning to me, however unanswerable, could make me believe that it is white. I might not be able to answer the argument, but if asked by the man making it, What do you now think about its color? I would answer, it is black. But, says he, you have failed to answer the argument. Yes; but it is black, nevertheless. Argument knows nothing about colors. My eye is the only witness to color, and I must believe its testimony rather than the "ipse dixit" of the most astute logician or the wisest philosopher. The eye is the only witness that can possibly know anything at all about it, and therefore the only witness that can testify certainly and truthfully concerning color, or beauty, or deformity. If the testimony of the eye be discredited, we can never have any certain knowledge of the color of anything, and color itself would be but a name without any meaning.

With my ear, filled with the concord of sweet

sounds of a grand old organ, I say, this is harmony; all the arguments of the profoundest logicians and wisest philosophers could not make me believe that such harmony is jarring discord. No amount of logic avails to prove a truth that lies outside of logic's sphere. Harmony is one of these truths not to be proven by argument, but can be understood only by the ear. The important thing to decide is the credibility of the witness. If we find that a witness is incapacitated by nature to comprehend a certain truth, it would be sheer madness to believe his testimony. If "Reason" knows nothing, and is so constituted that it is impossible that it can know anything about beauty or color or harmony, it would be folly to consider, even for a moment, its conclusions, much less be influenced by its testimony.

Again. I look upon a yellow fluid, honey. My eye is ignorant as to whether or no it is sweet or bitter; so also, is my ear. But I put it on my tongue and *it* makes oath that it is sweet. No amount of reasoning could make me believe that honey is bitter as aloes. I might not be able to answer the argument, but this fact would not make me discredit the testimony of my sense of taste. This is the only witness in the world to sweetness and bitterness, and if we discredit its testimony, then there is no other witness that is worthy of being believed, be-

cause there is no other witness capable of understanding the subject.

Again. I look upon a block of marble. My eye cannot decide whether it is hard or soft; neither can my ear nor my tongue. Why? Because these senses were not designed, in their constitution or being, to know anything about solidity or softness; therefore their testimony, while unimpeachable when confined within their proper spheres, are not to be believed should they undertake to testify concerning solidity and softness, which lie without their spheres. An argument might be made to prove that the block of marble is soft as wool, and I might be unable to detect the fallacy in one of the premises or flaw in the logic, still I would believe that it is hard, for the reason that the only witness that can possibly know anything about it testifies that it is.

Again. I look upon a most beautiful flower. Neither my eye, ear, taste nor touch can discover any fragrance about it. Why? Because neither of these was ever designed to testify concerning fragrance. But my nostril, or scent, swears that the rose exhales a sweet perfume. I cannot doubt this testimony, because it is the testimony of the only witness in the world to this particular truth. Thus we find that all certain knowledge concerning material or physical truth is obtained through the channel of our "five senses." *They* are the only wit-

nesses to all such truth, and their testimony is not to be questioned. You must remember, however, that we are treating with the "five senses" in their normal condition, and not in their abnormal. The testimony of the eye to color, if jaundiced or color-blind, would not be worthy of credit; but then the cause would be, not in the eye, but in the disease.

It is very evident now that all certain knowledge that we can possibly obtain concerning the being of the material or physical universe is furnished by the five senses. These are the witnesses, and the only witnesses to all such truths. And when testifying on this line, they cannot tell a falsehood, but if they should be called out of their sphere and required to testify concerning some scientific, philosophic or religious subject, they could not tell the truth. The importance, therefore, of being assured of the credibility of the witness, before receiving his testimony, cannot be over-estimated.

The lowest class of truths are the material. If the testimony of the "five senses" concerning it is unimpeachable, then it follows as a necessary consequence that to the higher and more important classes of truth, the testimony of their respective witnesses must be equally, or still more worthy of being believed.

We will now pass to the consideration of another and higher class of truth. The scientific and philo-

sophic. "Reason" is the only witness that has or can have absolutely certain knowledge of the truths of this class, and is therefore, the only credible witness, and it would be madness to discredit its testimony. There is not a single truth in this class but lies beyond the farthest range of the "five senses." In other words, the senses, which testify so truthfully concerning matter, or the physical world, if interrogated in regard to a scientific truth would modestly answer, we know nothing of such truth, and why put us on the stand? Would that all witnesses to the truth were just as honest.

Science does not create truth, it simply discovers it; and Reason's testimony concerning it is that it is truth. Two and three make five. This is not a physical truth, therefore the "five senses," nor either of them, do not know whether it is true or false; nor is it a truth of inspired revelation; therefore, "Faith" is not a witness to it; it is simply a mathematical truth, and "Reason" is the only witness. To say that it does not seem to be true and must therefore be false, would be a strange proceeding and unworthy of an intelligent being. "Reason" comprehends it and makes oath to its truth. The "three angles of a triangle are equal to two right angles." It would be folly to turn to the Bible to see whether this proposition is true or false. The Bible was not designed to teach mathematics, there-

fore, it refuses to be interrogated concerning this or any other scientific proposition. It has a higher mission to perform. Notwithstanding science and philosophy are noble in themselves, and have exercised a potent influence in moulding the civilization of the age, still, when brought in contrast with the eternal purpose of God, as seen in the glass of divine revelation, working out the highest destiny of the soul, we see how weak and limited they are; still they occupy a vast field in the economy of God, and are not to be despised.

The laws that underlie, regulate and control matter, are plain to reason. How do I know that there is such a law as gravitation? My reason says there is, and then demonstrates the fact. I cast my eyes upon the starry heavens, and my observation is, that all the heavenly bodies, while moving with tremendous velocity, still they move in circles. What holds them in their orbits? Reason answers, a power generally known by the name, gravitation. Observation proves that bodies move in straight lines, unless diverted by some extraneous force. The force that compels them to move in orbits is known by the name of gravity.

We see, moreover, that this law acts in every part of the universe in the same way, and to the same degree. I am obliged to believe the testimony of my reason on this subject, because this is in its

legitimate sphere, and it is the only witness to such truth. If I have a theory concerning a scientific truth, and a logician frames an argument that proves the contrary, and I am unable to answer the argument, then I must give up my theory, because Reason is the only credible witness to scientific truth and its testimony cannot be invalidated. This is true in regard to each and every scientific proposition. Reason is the only witness, and its testimony cannot be gainsayed.

Again, the science of chemistry is advancing more rapidly, perhaps, than any other at the present time. The discoveries being daily made in the laboratory are perfectly marvelous, and reason bears testimony to the truth of each. For ages, water slaked thirst and was universally used for this purpose. While the fact was always understood and appreciated, still, until comparatively recently, its constituent elements were not understood. That it consists mainly of two gases, combined in certain proportions, was discovered only about a century ago. This discovery, however, did not affect the water in the least, nor change its wholesome or beneficial effects. Experiment proves the fact that it consists of gases, and Reason says it is true, and its testimony must be believed.

Neither of the "five senses" knows anything at all about the constituents of water, nor in what propor-

tions they are combined. Nor does divine revelation propose to teach such truths; hence, neither the natural senses nor faith are competent witnesses to testify in this case. If they should presume to testify, their testimony would not be worthy of being believed, for the simple reason, they know nothing about such truths.

It is perfectly plain, that Reason is the only credible witness to the truth of scientific and philosophic propositions. Its testimony is unimpeachable concerning the truth or falsehood of all such propositions, but is not to be believed on any subject that reaches beyond its proper limitations. If brought to bear upon the truths of divine revelation, as it can know nothing of such truth, its testimony is not worthy of being believed. It is capable of weighing the evidence in the case; this and nothing more. Its sphere of operation is limited, and it must be kept within its proper bounds. While within such bounds it tells the truth, and nothing but the truth, and its testimony must be received and relied upon.

As the *five* natural *senses* are the only credible witnesses to physical truth; reason to scientific and philosophical; so *faith* is to religious or spiritual. "*Faith* is the *evidence* of things not seen."

All certain knowledge that we can possibly obtain concerning religious or spiritual truth, is secured through the testimony of "faith;" it being the only

witness to such truths. "Reason" is not competent to testify; its office in the religious sphere being to weigh evidence, and nothing more. It is a very easy matter to frame an argument, to prove almost any gospel truth to be false. Remember, however, that great danger to your soul's best and highest interests, is sure to follow, should you discard the testimony of "faith," because unable to answer the argument.

Revelation, while not opposed to "reason," was never designed to teach what reason teaches. Much of the Bible can be proven true, whether God said it or not. But believing all this does not constitute you a Christian. There are other parts of divine revelation which, containing the essence of the gospel, are as far removed from the comprehension of reason as purely scientific truth is from the comprehension of the *five* natural *senses*. With all such revelation, "Faith" only, can assure us of their truth.

It is "through faith," not by reason, "we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear." Leaving the Bible account of creation out of the question, I can prove to demonstration that the world was never made at all. I can prove that matter is *eternal*, from the very fact that it exists now. And the most *unreasonable* thing in the universe is, that such a world as this in

which we live should have been made out of nothing. "Reason says it is impossible to make something out of nothing. Why does inspiration tell us that the world was made? Because it is absolutely impossible that "*Reason*" could inform us of the fact. If matter is eternal, then matter is God; because eternity is an essential characteristic of Deity alone. You now see how important it is that God should have informed us of the origin of matter, and out of what, and by whom created. As "*Reason*" is incapacitated, from its very nature, to comprehend such a truth, and, it being absolutely necessary to know that matter was created, and not eternal, in order that we may not confound it with God, its creator, and make ship-wreck of our souls by worshipping it, we see why it is that divine inspiration should record the fact so simply and plainly.

If "reason" is unable to comprehend the fact that the world was created at all, is it not the very height of presumption for it to presume to teach me how long it took God to create it? Does it not smack of infidelity for it to say, and attempt to prove, the impossibility of it being created in six days, as God says it was? Why attempt to make these six days of india-rubber, so that they may stretch over six periods of millions of years each? Simply because it is unreasonable that God could have created it in six natural days, with its different strata. We admit

the unreasonableness of the thing. But is it more unreasonable than that it was made out of nothing? Until "reason" can demonstrate the possibility of "something" being made out of "nothing," it need not tell me "*how long*" it will necessarily take to make this "something." Ninety-nine hundredths of the controversies on this subject have not added one iota to the intelligence of the world. The fact is, the world would have gained vastly if there had never been anything written on the subject at all, except what the Bible records.

Some men in every age are found who are "wise about what is written," and though they may be, and many of them are pious men, and would not for the world throw the slightest suspicion upon the teachings of the Bible, still the plausibility of both their reasoning and conclusions tend only to shake confidence in the truth of inspiration, make infidels of the masses, and blight the prospects of the pious. If men would only consider that "*Reason*" is not the witness in this case; that it knows nothing of the subject, and that it is impossible for it to know anything, then its testimony would do no harm, for the simple reason men would not listen to it, nor be influenced by it. If I do not believe what the Bible says about the creation of the world out of nothing, then, as the human mind is constituted, I am compelled to believe that it was never created at all;

that it is eternal. Then, all this talk about everlasting periods is nonsense.

But I am told that three-fourths, or perhaps four-fifths, of the scholars in the world now believe that the "six days of creation" were not natural days, but periods. Admit it, does this make it so? Until comparatively recently history tells me, not only three-fourths, or four-fifths, but that all the schools, academies and colleges in the world believed and taught that the world was flat. Did that make it so? Our ideas of truth do not affect the truth, but may affect us very materially. All the scholars believing that the world was flat, did not flatten it a particle. Do all scholars believe now that the world is flat? No! Science has proven the contrary. "*Reason*" can demonstrate with absolute certainty the spherical form of the earth, and we are bound to accept its logic and conclusions, or its testimony. Why? Because this is neither a *physical* nor *inspired* proposition, but purely a scientific one, and reason is the only witness that knows anything about it, and if we believe not its testimony, then the truth must remain forever an uncertainty to us, because there is no other witness to this particular truth whose testimony is worthy of being believed. "Reason" never willfully and knowingly swears falsely, and yet it tells many falsehoods, not, however, when testifying concerning truths within its

sphere, but when it steps over into the sphere of the *inspired* or *religious*, and testifies concerning truth, of which it knows nothing, and from its very nature cannot know anything.

The Bible is true; "Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the *evidence* of things not seen." The "five natural senses" cannot see scientific truth, therefore cannot be credible witnesses to such truth. The Reason cannot "*see*" spiritual or religious truth, and for the same reason is not a credible witness to this class of truths. "Faith," however, perceives clearly and understands fully spiritual or revealed truth, and its testimony cannot be disputed.

How do I know with absolute certainty that the first man, Adam, was constituted my Federal Head and representative in law? The Bible says so, and I believe what it says. Suppose I do not believe the testimony of Faith, then there is no other witness capable of giving credible testimony to this truth. Should I interrogate *Reason*, it will tell me that it is impossible. That God should be a just God, and then without my consent, yea, six thousand years before I had a being, make my future happiness or misery contingent upon the conduct of a mere creature, and because that creature sinned I must and did sin in him, and fell with him in his first transgression, is positively absurd. Reason

asks the question, Can such a thing be just? and it is obliged to answer, no. Then if we credit the testimony of *Reason*, we are obliged to conclude that Adam was *not* constituted our Federal Head and representative, or if he was, it was an act of gross injustice to us on the part of God. We see plainly the result if we allow *Reason* to testify. The only way I can possibly know the truth is to believe what God says about it.

How do I know that the "only begotten and well beloved son of God is the Redeemer of the lost?" God says so, and I believe what he says; faith testifies to the fact.

How do I know that it was necessary that Jesus, the Redeemer, though sinless, should be "made sin for us;" that he should and did obey the law in our stead, suffer the penalty, which was death, and rise for our justification? God says so, and I believe what he says. Reason's testimony is to the contrary. But as it knows nothing, and cannot, from its very nature, know anything about this truth, I would be a fool to listen at, much less credit, its testimony. This is an "unseen" truth, and faith is its only witness.

How can we know that there is a heaven for the redeemed. a place specially prepared for all who love the Lord Jesus? The Bible says so, and we believe what it says. Suppose I do not believe what

it says? Then heaven is a myth, as far as I am concerned, but a reality as far as itself is concerned. Faith only can give it "substance" or reality to me. It should not be matter of astonishment that men should be found who deny that *heaven* has an existence. They do not believe the testimony of *faith*, and their *reason* drives them to the opposite conclusion.

How can we know with certainty that there is a hell, and that the wicked shall be turned into it, with all the nations who forget God? The Bible says so, and we are to believe what it says.

It should be no matter of astonishment to find men in every age of the world, and under all degrees of culture and intelligence, exerting their powers to the utmost to make the world believe that there is no such place as hell; that what the Bible says about it is contradicted by reason and common sense, and that the most intelligent of men are already convinced that it is nothing more nor less than the creature of a phrenzied brain. The most natural thing imaginable, is for men who "who know not God" to make strenuous efforts to speak and write hell out of existence. They do not believe what God says about it, and as "*faith*" only can give "*substance*," or reality, to the truth, as far as they are concerned, then it must be, as their *reason* pronounces it, a myth. But *reason* knows nothing about it then why believe

its testimony? In a court of justice, the witness who is forced to acknowledge that he knows nothing about the criminal, nor his connection with the crime for which he is being tried, would not be considered a competent witness, and the court would not permit him to testify in the case. "*Hell*" is the subject of divine revelation, and *reason* can know nothing about it whatever; then why listen to its testimony? Reasonable or unreasonable, *hell* is a reality, for the Bible says so, and the Bible is true.

How do we know that there is a crown of righteousness for all who love the Lord Jesus? God says so, and we believe what he says. Faith in God's word is the only evidence we can have of its truth; and I ask, is it not more than sufficient? Is it not overwhelming evidence? To suppose that the great God of heaven and earth is capable of telling a falshood is blasphemy. You may question the veracity of a creature, but not of God.

Is it possible for a believer, though a sinner, to be one with Christ? Reason says no; but what saith the scriptures? "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these, my brethren, ye have done it unto me." Faith bears witness to this.

As said before, there are hundreds of facts recorded in the Bible which accord perfectly with reason; in other words, *reason* says they are true, but the believing of all such truths is no evidence that you are a

Christian, because the *belief* is not the exercise of the grace, "*faith*," but the natural conclusion of reason. I believe, or know, that the three angles of a triangle are equal to two right angles. In this the grace of *faith* is not exercised at all, because it is a scientific proposition, and *faith* don't know any thing about it, but *reason* is the witness to the fact; therefore, my knowledge or belief is based upon the testimony of my reason.

"*Faith*" deals only with those facts, even in the Bible, that "*reason*" cannot comprehend.

No matter how opposed to reason a declaration, a doctrine or a promise may be, if it is in the Bible I believe it without asking for further proof. "Thus saith the Lord," is a sufficient reason for believing it.

Blessed be God for giving us the Bible, the revelation of his will to the children of men. In this grand mirror we see our sins, our vile pollution, and at the same glance discover the sovereign remedy.

While our ears are filled with Sinai thunders against transgression, bleeding Calvary lifts its head and voice, and the cheering articulations rising above the din of groans is, "deliver from going down to the pit, I have found a ransom." "It is finished." Salvation is free. The same blessed Bible that discovers to us our misery, wretchedness and exposure to eternal death, reveals a redemption

commensurate with our every necessity and "lures to brighter worlds, and leads the way."

While I gaze upon this beautiful world, with its mountain-peaks piercing the clouds; its valleys of green stretching far and wide; its meandering streams laving by beds of roses whose tints vie in beauty with the pencilings of the rainbow, my thoughts and feelings rise in rapture to God, the maker of them all. I experience a thrill of delight as I am assured that this same God of wisdom, power and skill is my God, my Saviour and my friend. Then glancing my eye athwart the starry concave; noting the splendor of each burning star; discerning the wisdom that formed their orbits, and adoring the power that holds them there, my soul leaps heavenward, longing to stand in the presence and revel in the friendship of that God who out of nothing called the stupendous universe into existence; simply "spake and it was done, commanded and it stood fast." Yet there are loftier sentiments than nature can inspire; there are heights and depths in God's spiritual economy not bounded by geographical nor astronomical lines, that fill the soul with wonder, gratitude and love. It is while standing on this higher plane, surrounded with these evidences of Divine beneficence, that the grandeur of our moral nature appears, flashing its lustre (the bright reflection of the light and glory of the Eter-

nal Throne), and these, ever towering above the farthest stretch of natural vision and beyond the grasp of the most enlightened reason, still they come within the mighty range of "Faith's" vision and understanding, and *its* testimony concerning their sublime reality is unimpeachable.

Thus, all truths, purely spiritual, and which can only be known through special revelation, such as "Heaven," "Eternal Life," "Crown of Glory," "Heirship," etc., are subjects of faith only, because "Reason" cannot instruct us concerning them; in fact, is unable to understand or comprehend them when revealed. Faith is the only witness of their truth.

The wisdom of God, no less than his amazing love, appears in the fact that he has made our salvation turn on "Faith," and not on understanding. The little child can believe that what its mother says is true without being able to comprehend her meaning. If our eternal well-being was contingent upon comprehending Trinity in Unity, we could not be saved, but we can easily believe the fact as revealed. Hence there is no degree of ignorance or illiteracy that bars heaven against the soul. To believe what God says because he says it, and in a way, too, that moulds our life, is the brightest evidence we can possibly give that we have "passed from death unto life." Then, "believe, and thou

shalt be saved." "Faith is the evidence of things not seen."

CHAPTER XIV.

PRAYER.

There is perhaps no doctrine of our holy religion less understood than the clearly revealed doctrine of prayer. It is universal in its application; the same in all ages and among all peoples; a command and a privilege, and the channel through which grace as a river flows into the soul, still its design and nature are, by vast multitudes of devout Christians, totally misconceived or misapprehended.

The "*nature*" of God is often confounded with his "*will*," and this, too, in a way that renders the answer to prayer extremely doubtful, even in the mind of the pious worshipper. When understood, however, there is no religious obligation more highly esteemed or more sacredly cherished.

Some persons cannot sing, nor read, nor grasp the principles of science; still all can pray. Some are ignorant of the nature of the command, still their prayer is effectual. While, therefore, it is not essential in order to catch the ear of God and command his grace that the doctrine should be fully understood, and the nature of God comprehended, yet much of

the comfort and peace and joy of the believer are dependent upon having some certain knowledge of these great truths.

There are no contingencies in prayer. It is the nature of God to answer every petition; He cannot help it any more than He can help being holy, or good, or just, or righteous. These qualities are essential characteristics of Deity without which He could not exist, and it is just as impossible for Him to exist and not answer prayer. "Ask and ye shall (not may) receive; seek and ye *shall* find; knock and it *shall* be opened unto you, for *every one* that asketh receiveth, and he that seeketh findeth, and to him that knocketh it shall be opened."

Many pious and devout believers approach a throne of grace earnestly desiring some great blessing, but with serious misgivings. They entertain grave doubts as to whether God will answer their prayer or not. They are confident that they desire a good thing, but are doubtful whether God will grant it or not. This is all wrong; it is the very essence of infidelity. Still, this is the animus of a multitude of Christians. The command is, "come with boldness to the throne of grace;" "open thy mouth wide and I will fill it." Yet they come doubting and ask with closed lips.

The proposition that we now propose to demonstrate is this, viz.: It is the "*nature*" of God to an-

swer prayer. *He* can cease to be God, just as certainly as He can refuse to answer prayer. If He cannot cease to be good and holy, neither can He fail to hear and answer prayer. He cannot contradict His nature.

We are to remember that the "*will*" of God is one thing; his "*nature*" another thing altogether. While his *nature* and his *will* can never conflict, still they seem to clash frequently; they appear to cross each other at every angle.

As far as the human nature of Christ is concerned, we can understand Him because we are human. His human nature being the same as our own, sin excepted, it is a thing of experience. He was a true man as well as very God. Bearing this in mind, much of the Bible is made plain.

We will now prove from the Bible our proposition, viz.: "It is the *nature* of God to answer prayer."

The working of the first miracle at Cana of Gallilee furnishes ample proof of this fact, were there no other evidence to be found in Holy Writ. But the Bible is full of such evidence. The mother of Jesus, on this particular occasion, approached him and informed him that the wine was out. This was a prayer that he should make wine. He caught her idea at once, and replied in words to this effect: What is that to thee and me? We are simply

guests; it is not my business to furnish wine for this occasion; it is the business of the governor of the feast. This was all very reasonable, was it not? It is not the business of guests to provide the feast. Had his mother been convinced that she had committed a mistake, and had said, I beg pardon for having made such a request, and thus withdrew her petition, he had not made the wine. But she was not convinced that she had blundered, and would not withdraw the petition. She remained perfectly silent. When Christ saw that she would not withdraw her request for the reason he had given, he then gave a still stronger reason why he should not furnish the wine; he said, "mine hour has not yet come." Hour for what? For working miracles. Why? Because I propose to establish the *divinity* of the mission of the church in the world by miracle. It is vastly important that I have twelve witnesses to bear testimony to the truth of every miracle I shall work. I have only five of my apostles chosen as yet; I must select seven more. I desire the full college of apostles before I begin to work miracles to the end which I desire to accomplish. This does seem like a good reason why he should not make wine. But the mother did not so understand it. If she had been convinced that she was wrong, and had said, I now see my mistake, this would have been a withdrawing of her petition and

he would not have made the wine. But she could not see that she had made a mistake because she really had not; hence, just as Jesus had concluded his reason for not making wine, she said to the servants, do whatever he tells you; and she left him without withdrawing her petition. Jesus immediately said to the servants, "Fill these water-pots with water." And they filled them to the brim. And he said unto them, "Draw out now, and bear unto the governor of the feast." And they bore it. When the ruler of the feast had tasted the water that was made wine and knew not whence it was (but the servants which drew the water knew), the governor of the feast called the bridegroom and said unto him, "Every man at the beginning doth set forth good wine, and when men have well drunk, then that which is worse; but thou hast kept the good wine until now." No wonder that the discovery was so quickly made that this was better wine than the preceding. It was the best wine ever served at a feast. It was the only perfect wine ever made. Christ cannot make an imperfect thing. He substantially gave two reasons why he should not make wine; yet, he made it. The APPEARANCE is, he was unwilling to make it; the FACT is, he was willing. Appearances and facts are quite different tihngs in religion, as well as in the world. He gave his mother two reasons why he should

not make the wine and each apparently good. Had she, for these or any other, withdrawn the petition, it is very evident that he had not made the wine.

The mother approached him on the side of his "nature," not on the side of his "will." It was not revealed what he was willing to do in the premises; but she well understood what it was his nature to *be*. She knew he could only be good, and do good and not evil. Thus, while approaching him directly on the side of his "*nature*," she nevertheless recognized his "*will*" in the matter. He gave two reasons why he should not make the wine. The first was inferential, that it was not his place to supply it for the guests, he being a guest himself; the second was positive that his "time had not yet come." Notwithstanding both these reasons, he wrought the miracle. There was nothing wrong in doing so, and his *nature* being to do right, he was obliged to answer his mother's petition just in the line of her desire. Had there been anything detrimental to his mother's piety, or derogatory to the church, or injurious to the world, or even a single soul, he would have answered by withholding. Then, I maintain that *his nature* forced the answer, just as his mother desired.

Take another illustration. The woman who had an issue of blood for twelve years understood how to approach Christ in order to receive a cure. It

was not revealed in the Bible whether it was his "*will*" to cure her or not, hence she went on the side of his "*nature*." It is important, in order to understand her healing, that you keep in mind that Jesus was a "*true man*" as well as God. If he was a man, he could not see behind him without turning his head any more than you or I. If he was a true man, he did not know all things; as a man, in other words, he was not Omniscient. As God, he was Omniscient, but not as man. In order to know, as a man, that that diseased woman was present, he must have had the same sort of evidence that would have convinced any other man of the fact. As the *Son* of God, Jesus is not the Saviour; as the *Son* of Mary, he is not the Saviour, but as the Son of God and Mary, he is the Saviour. It was as necessary that Christ should possess a true body and reasonable soul, in order to make a redemption commensurate with the sinner's necessities, as it was to be divine. As a man, then, Christ could not see beyond the range of natural vision, nor did he know all things. Because Omniscience is an essential characteristic of Diety alone.

The diseased woman approached her Lord on the side of his human nature, the part that she could understand, as she herself was human. She conceived the idea, "if I but touch his garment, I will be made whole." She did not propose to ask Christ

to heal her; she purposed seeking a cure. The reason for adopting this plan may have been because she had been wealthy, as we infer from the statement that she "had suffered many things of many physicians, and had spent *all* that she had," and being accustomed to pay for favors she could not now brook beggary. If she had had the means she once possessed, she would doubtless have gone and asked Jesus to heal her, and then offered to pay for the cure. But, being poor, and unwilling to beg, she adopted a different course. She determined to seek a cure. There could be nothing wrong in adopting this method, else Jesus had rebuked her. It was not necessary that she should stand up before the multitude, acknowledge her poverty, and make a public request of her Lord, though all this, perhaps, would have been right, still it was not demanded, as the success of the method she adopted proves.

Having been wealthy, her noble spirit would not permit her to beg, though the grave was in sight. She would not press through the crowd and meet Jesus face to face, but she came behind him, touched his garment and was immediately healed. Did Jesus, as a man, know who it was that touched him? How could he, since he could not see behind him without turning his head any more than you or I? The entire incident, as recorded, shows plainly that, as a

man, he had no idea who it was that touched him. If he knew, why did he turn around and ask, "Who touched me?" To this question the reply of the disciple was in words to this effect: "We are all crowding around you; we have all touched you; why do you ask such a question?" Ah! but your touch was a natural touch, to which my nature never responds in the way of healing; but there has been a hand of "faith" laid on me, "for I perceive that virtue hath gone out of me." Some sick person has been healed. It is my nature to respond to every touch of faith. The woman presented herself and he congratulated her on receiving a cure in her own particular way. At least, he administered no rebuke.

Thus, it is evident that it is Christ's nature to answer prayer. It was not revealed whether he was willing to heal this diseased woman or not; hence she approached him on the side of his nature, believing that a touch was all that was necessary, and she was not disappointed. We recognize the fact, however, that notwithstanding it was Christ's nature to heal her, it was also his "will," because his nature and will can never clash.

It seems clear that the healing was simultaneous with the touch, and yet Christ, as a man, did not know the nature of the disease, nor who it was that touched him. The touch was a prayer. The

proposition is proven; it is the nature of God to answer prayer. "Seek and ye shall find."

There is a third class, represented by Zaccheus, who are not required to ask or seek, in the common acceptation of these terms. They are required to "knock." If you will read the incident of the meeting of Christ and Zaccheus as recorded in the nineteenth chapter of Luke's gospel, you will see that the pith of the whole doctrine is taught in the phrase, "little of stature." Bear in mind that the Christian religion, so far from working a miracle in us, does not even require that a rich man shall become poor, or cease to exert a great influence. Zaccheus earnestly desired to see Jesus. But the multitude standing between himself and Jesus obstructed his vision. His faith manifested in his desire did not work a miracle, by parting the crowd so that he could see him through the breach; nor did it cause him to look in a curved line over the heads of the multitude and down on Jesus. In either event, a miracle must have been wrought. The laws of optics however, were not interfered with.

Faith always devises the proper expedient. Zaccheus learned the direction the Lord was going; and looking in that direction he saw a tree. His reason was brought into play and it told him that he could get above the multitude by climbing that tree. This concluded the office of reason with him. Thus

far it told him the truth, and he acted wisely by following its instructions. But had he followed its teachings a single step further, he had never seen Jesus. It would have led him astray. It would have said, "You are Zaccheus—the chief among the publicans—wielding an immense influence. Climbing trees is boys' sport, and not becoming a man. If this multitude sees you climbing that tree, they will justly conclude that you are beside yourself ; that you have gone deranged, and they will lose confidence in your judgment." This is all reasonable.

No one is surprised or even amused at seeing a child on his knees calling ant-lions out of their homes, but people wondered when they saw that grand old philosopher Socrates prancing through the streets of Athens on a cane horse.

Zaccheus did not care what the world, the flesh or satan thought ; he desired to see Jesus; he therefore climbed the tree. As the multitude passed along with Jesus in the midst, his eye rested upon the head of one, then another and another, till presently it rested upon the head of Jesus. That moment the eye of Jesus rested on Zaccheus, and not only so, but he said, "Zaccheus, come down, for today I must abide at thy house." Jesus could not pass by without recognizing Zaccheus and saying what he did. He could not help responding to the look of faith any more than he could help being

God. It was his nature, and as faith makes the believer and Christ "*one*," not to-morrow, but now, accounts for the expression, "to-day I must abide at thy house."

Did Jesus, as a man, know that Zaccheus was in that tree? It is reasonable to suppose that he was not cognizant of the fact until he was told by the look of Zaccheus. Hence, we conclude that it must have been the nature of God to answer his prayerful look. Here was a "knock" or "look" of faith. "Knock" and it shall be opened unto you.

We have seen that the mother of Jesus "asked" and received; the diseased woman "sought" and found; and Zaccheus "knocked" and it was opened. While inspiration clearly shows that the human family is divided into three classes, represented by the mother of Jesus, the diseased woman and Zaccheus, still, it would not have been wrong for the woman to have faced the Lord and asked that he would heal her disease, but this was not demanded; hence, she received her healing without being subjected to such public humiliation. "To beg, she was ashamed," and God did not require it. She had a noble spirit, which spirit was engendered by God's gift of property, and now that the property was gone, while the spirit remained, God recognized its nobleness and healed her by her own touch. Nor would it have been a sin for Zaccheus to have pressed through

the crowd, and make loud professions of his love for the Master in the hearing of all, but possibly it would have cost him his position and destroyed his influence in his busines relations with the world; neither of which christianity demands. Christianity ennobles every vocation that is not in itself sinful. Hence, Zaccheus chose the right course. This we know, because God approved it.

Still further proof of the truth of our proposition, that it is the "nature of God to answer prayer." Inspiration says, "what man is there of you whom if his son ask bread, will he give him a stone?" Is it the "nature" or the "will" of a father to give bread instead of a stone to his hungry child?" It is, or ought to be, both, but the inference from the question asked, is that the father's "nature" is referred to. Besides, if the father's reason is dethroned and he should hold a stone in one hand and bread in the other, and his hungry child asks for the bread, he would give it instead of the stone. "Or if he ask a fish, will he give him a serpent?" If he ask for that that will nourish the body, would it not be *unnatural* for the father to give something that would destroy his life? The thing is too plain to be questioned. The "nature" of the father, not his "will," is referred to by both questions. "If ye, then being evil," know the difference between a "good" gift and a "bad" one, "and how to give it," the conclusion is

overwhelming, "How much more shall your Father which is in heaven, give good things to them that ask him."

The question that now presents itself with a considerable degree of force is this, viz: when should we, in prayer, approach Christ on the side of his "nature?" and when on the side of his "will?" We answer, when the thing we desire is not revealed in his word, we should ordinarily approach him on the side of his "nature;" but when the thing is revealed, then we should approach him on the side of his "will." We are told that "many ask and receive not because they ask amiss." How may we know when we ask amiss, when our petition implies that God's word may not be true? For example, suppose a church organization should meet to pray for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit in a precious revival, and I, as their mouthpiece, should offer such a petition as this: "Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst open the windows of heaven and pour upon us the Holy Spirit, until there shall not be room to receive." What sort of petition would you call this? Would it not be an insult to the King of Kings? It is nothing more nor less than the prayer of an infidel. Has not God revealed the fact that the Holy Spirit is good? Has he not also revealed "that he is more willing to give good gifts unto those that ask, than earthly parents are to give good

gifts unto their children?" Then to say "if thou wilt," since God has said he is "more willing," is to doubt his word. The thing being revealed, we are to approach him on the side of his "will" and plead his most gracious promise. Therefore, the petition should run thus: "Lord, thou hast assured us of thy great willingness to grant unto those who earnestly desire the regenerating power and reviving influences of the Holy Spirit. We plead thy promise; grant it unto us now." God has promised to meet with and bless his church when assembled for worship, therefore in her assembled capacity we dare not doubt his sincerity by saying "Lord, if thou wilt."

Again, God answers our prayers oft-times by withholding. This is invariably the case when we ask for those things that would prove a curse, rather than a blessing to us. He sees the end from the beginning, and will not suffer even the desires of his children to become their ruin. To illustrate: I may be walking in a flower-garden, leading by the hand my little child. The child may discover a venomous serpent in coil among the violets. He reaches for it; I hold him back. That reach is a prayer to me to let him have the serpent to play with; he cries for it, still I will not grant his request. The child may conclude that father's heart is not kind and loving. But father knows that that serpent has

a deadly fang. If he grants his child's desire it will ruin him; will cause him to die a most painful death. If the child knew what the consequences would be, as father knows, he would not wish to handle that serpent. I therefore answer his prayer by withholding, and I do precisely as he would have me do if he understood the consequences as father understands them.

Another illustration. Your little child is sick, and, to human appearances, nigh unto death. You dare not pray that God shall take him out of the world. This would be to trample upon parental affection. Besides, you are not certain but that God has a grand work for him to accomplish in the world. You are, therefore, shut up to one single course, and that is to pray that God will rebuke his disease and restore him to health and strength, but at the same time merge your *will* into the *will* of God; "not my will, but thine be done." Why are you required to merge your *will* into God's? Because it is not revealed in the Bible whether it would be for the child's best interests, or the good of the church or world, for him to recover. You know that if God takes him from the world, in his infancy, he will be saved and glorified to all eternity. Still it would be unnatural to pray God to take him. Now, if you are really God's child yourself, he will do with your child precisely what you would want

him to do, if you could see the end from the beginning as he sees it. If God sees that it would be a curse to the child to be restored to health; that it would be a curse to the church and to the world—and that he would live and die unhonored and unsung, and fill an infidel's grave and his soul be lost—he will answer your prayer, not by rebuking his disease, as you desire, but by taking him to glory. Is not this what you would have him do, if you could see the end from the beginning as God sees it? When the children of believing parents are taken from them in infancy, I feel very confident that it is in mercy to themselves, and a blessing to the church. God knows best, and he always does the best for those who love him. "The Judge of all the earth will do right." Herein is our strength in bereavement. The promises of God are sure. By faith we accept the dispensation of divine providence, whether freighted with tears or smiles, as equally good, and evidences alike of God's favor and love. His hand of chastening is no less an evidence of affection than his smile of prosperity. Whether, therefore, we be tossed upon the billows of affliction or sail the calm sea of joy and delight, it is the same loving hand at the helm, with power, not only to guide our barque into the peaceful harbor, but to transmute the tears into pearls and our smiles into raptures. When Jacob mourned his Joseph and parted with his Benj-

amin, in the weakness of his human nature he cried out, "all these things are against me," but he soon learned that the same heart that decreed his bitterness and woe was throbbing for his life and peace. We know not "what a day may bring forth," but bring what it may, grace will extract sweets divine, or show the rainbow in the tear, or add lustre to the light. To know that we pray to a God "who doeth all things well," is all the evidence we want that he will answer for the best. It may be by a frown and a pang, or a smile and a joy.

When we recount the many occasions for the good of mankind, in which prayer was the mighty factor of benign influence, we cannot hesitate for a moment to render ascriptions of praise, and power, and dominion to Him, whose ear is ever open to the cry of the weakest of his saints, as well as to the united hosts of his redeemed church. The praises of the glorified fail to touch and move his sympathetic heart, like the prayer of his struggling child in sorrow.

Sun, stand still! and universal nature paused. Shadow, ten degrees backward move! and Hezekiah knew his life was lengthened fifteen years. Moses entered upon his mission in prayer. God answered by a "still, small voice," when such would suffice, and then by miracle when the exegencies demanded. The Saviour prayed unto the Father,

and the whole world will become the beneficiary of his petitions. Paul prayed, and the Gentile nations are rejoicing in the light. "Ask, and ye shall receive; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you. For every one that asketh, receiveth; and he that seeketh, findeth; and to him that knocketh, it shall be opened."

To the weak, sinful and dejected sinner, trembling and doubting the truth of the promise, "him that cometh unto me, I will not turn empty away," we would say, cast your fears behind your back, for thousands, just as guilty and unworthy, have found the promise true, and ere they reached the valley of the shadow of death rejoiced in hope of the glory of God; and washed in the blood of the Lamb slain, stepped upon the shining shore, with the voice of the great Redeemer ringing in their ears, "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." So may *you* trust the blood of the everlasting covenant, and find that peace and joy that passeth all natural understanding while sojourning here below, and then when called up higher, will enter upon the fulness of that fruition that awaits all the redeemed. Therefore, "pray without ceasing. Pray and never faint.

"Prayer was appointed to convey
The blessings God designs to give.

Long as they live should Christians pray,
For only while they pray, they live.

"If pains afflict, or wrongs oppress,
If cares distract, or fears dismay;
If guilt deject, if sins distress,
The remedy's before thee—pray.